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THE WORKS OF
CHARLES LAMB

EDITED BY

WILLIAM MACDONALD

IN TWELVE VOLUMES

VOL. XI

LETTERS

VOLUME ONE

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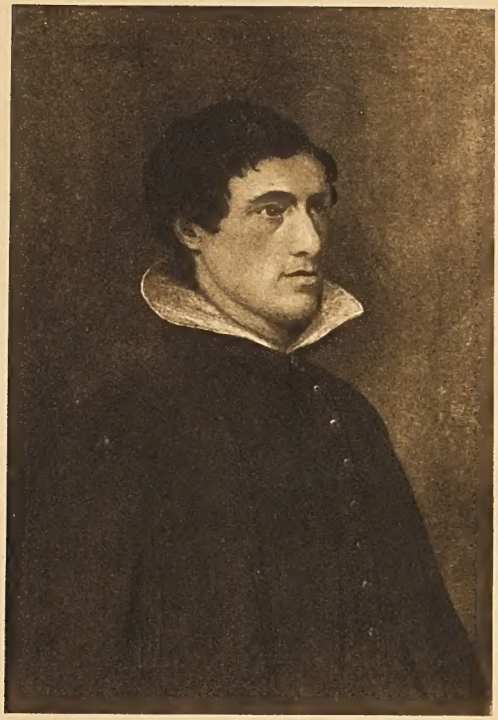

Charles Lamb.
From the picture in the National Portrait Gallery painted in 1805 by William Hazlitt.

LETTERS

OF

CHARLES LAMB

EDITED WITH PREFACE

BY

WILLIAM MACDONALD

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS
BY HERBERT RAILTON
AND PORTRAITS

VOLUME ONE

LONDON
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NOTE

Owing to a miscalculation, the first volume contains a great many more pages of the Letters than the second. This inequality of division not being discovered until too late to alter the arrangement, it has been thought better to put the Editor's Preface at the beginning of the second volume in order to make the two books more equal in their outward appearance.

THE PUBLISHERS.

The East India House

From an Original Pencil Drawing by T. Hosmer Shepherd, in the Crace Collection

BOOK I.—1796-1799

FAMILY HISTORY AND LITERARY BEGINNINGS

CHAPTER I

EARLY CORRESPONDENCE WITH COLERIDGE MAY 1796—JUNE 1798

I. TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

May 27, 1796.

Dear Coleridge,—Make yourself perfectly easy about May. I paid his bill when I sent your clothes. I was flush of money, and am so still to all the purposes of a single life; so give yourself no further concern about it. The money would be superfluous to me if I had it.

When Southey becomes as modest as his predecessor, Milton, and publishes his Epics in duodecimo, I will read 'em; a guinea a book is somewhat exorbitant, nor have I the opportunity of borrowing the work. The extracts from it in the *Monthly Review*, and the short passages in your *Watchman*, seem to me much superior to any thing in his partnership account with Lovell. Your poems I shall procure forthwith. There were noble lines in what you inserted in one of your Numbers from *Religious Musings*; but I thought them elaborate. I am somewhat glad you have given up that paper: it must have been dry, unprofitable, and of "dissonant mood" to your disposition. I wish you success in all your undertakings, and am glad to hear you are employed about the *Evidences of Religion*. There is need of multiplying such books a hundredfold in this philosophical age, to *prevent* converts to atheism, for they seem too tough disputants to meddle with afterwards.

Le Grice is gone to make puns in Cornwall. He has got a tutorship to a young boy living with his mother, a widow lady. He will, of course, initiate him quickly in "whatsoever things are honest, lovely, and of good report." He has cut Miss Hunt completely: the poor girl is very ill on the occasion; but he laughs at it, and justifies himself by saying "she does not see me laugh." Coleridge, I know not what suffering scenes you have gone through at Bristol. My life has been somewhat diversified of late. The six weeks that finished last year and began this, your very humble servant spent very agreeably in a madhouse, at Hoxton. I am got somewhat rational now, and don't bite any one. But mad I was; and many a vagary my imagination played with me, enough to make a volume, if all were told. My Sonnets I have extended to the number of nine since I saw you, and will some day communicate to you. I am beginning a poem in blank verse, which, if I finish, I publish.

White is on the eve of publishing (he took the hint from Vortigern) "Original letters of Falstaff, Shallow," &c.; a copy you shall have when it comes out. They are without exception the best imitations I ever saw. Coleridge, it may convince you of my regards for you when I tell you my head ran on you in my madness, as much almost as on another person, who I am inclined to think was the more immediate cause of my temporary frenzy.

The Sonnet I send you has small merit as poetry; but you will be curious to read it when I tell you it was written in my prison-house in one of my lucid intervals.

TO MY SISTER

If from my lips some angry accents fell,
Peevish complaint, or harsh reproof unkind,
'Twas but the error of a sickly mind
And troubled thoughts, clouding the purer well
And waters clear of Reason; and for me,
Let this my verse the poor atonement be—
My verse, which thou to praise wert e'er inclined
Too highly, and with a partial eye to see
No blemish. Thou to me didst ever show
Kindest affection: and would'st oft-times lend
An ear to the desponding love-sick lay,
Weeping my sorrows with me, who repay
But ill the mighty debt of love I owe,
Mary, to thee, my sister and my friend.

With these lines, and with that sister's kindest remembrances to C——, I conclude.

Yours sincerely, LAMB.

Your *Conciones ad Populum* are the most eloquent politics that ever came in my way.

Write when convenient—not as a task, for here is nothing in this letter to answer.

We cannot send our remembrances to Mrs C., not having seen her, but believe me our best good wishes attend you both.

My civic and poetic compliments to Southey if at Bristol. Why, he is a very Leviathan of Bards!—the small minnow, I!

II. TO THE SAME

[No Month] 1796.

I am in such violent pain with the headache, that I am fit for nothing but transcribing, scarce for that. When I get your poems, and the *Joan of Arc*, I will exercise my presumption in giving you my opinion of 'em. The mail does not come in before to-morrow (Wednesday) morning. The following Sonnet was composed during a walk down into Hertfordshire early in last Summer :—

The Lord of Light shakes off his drowsyhed.
  Fresh from his couch up springs the lusty sun,
  And girds himself his mighty race to run;
Meantime, by truant love of rambling led,
I turn my back on thy detested walls,
  Proud City, and thy sons I leave behind,
  A selfish, sordid, money-getting kind,
Who shut their ears when holy Freedom calls.
I pass not thee so lightly, humble spire,
  That mindest me of many a pleasure gone,
  Of merrier days, of Love and Islington,
Kindling anew the flames of past desire;
  And I shall muse on thee, slow journeying on,
To the green plains of pleasant Hertfordshire.

The last line is a copy of Bowles's, "To the green Hamlet in the peaceful Plain." Your ears are not so very fastidious; many people would not like words so prosaic and familiar in a Sonnet as Islington and Hertfordshire. The next was written within a day or two of the last, on revisiting a spot where the scene was laid of my first Sonnet that "mock'd my step with many a lonely glade."

When last I roved these winding wood-walks green,
  Green winding walks, and shady pathways sweet,
Oft-times would Anna seek the silent scene,
  Shrouding her beauties in the lone retreat.
No more I hear her footsteps in the shade;
  Her image only in these pleasant ways
  Meets me self-wandering, where in happier days
I held free converse with my fair-hair'd maid.

I pass'd the little cottage which she loved,
The cottage which did once my all contain:
It spake of days that ne'er must come again;
Spake to my heart, and much my heart was moved.
Now "Fair befall thee, gentle maid," said I;
And from the cottage turn'd me with a sigh.

The next retains a few lines from a Sonnet of mine which you once remarked had no "body of thought" in it. I agree with you, but have preserved a part of it, and it runs thus. I flatter myself you will like it:—

A timid grace sits trembling in her eye,
As loth to meet the rudeness of men's sight
Yet shedding a delicious lunar light,
That steeps in kind oblivious ecstacy
The care-crazed mind, like some still melody:
Speakiug most plain the thoughts which do possess
Her gentle sprite, peace and meek quietness,
And innocent loves, and maiden purity:
A look whereof might heal the cruel smart
Of changed friends, or Fortune's wrongs unkind;
Might to sweet deeds of mercy move the heart
Of him who hates his brethren of mankind.
Turn'd are those beams from me, who fondly yet
Past joys, vain loves, and buried hopes regret.

The next and last I value most of all. 'Twas composed close upon the heels of the last, in that very wood I had in mind when I wrote "Methinks how dainty sweet."

We were two pretty babes, the youngest she,
The youngest, and the loveliest far, I ween,
And Innocence her name. The time has been
We two did love each other's company;
Time was, we two had wept to have been apart:
But when, with show of seeming good-beguiled,
I left the garb and manners of a child,
And my first love for man's society,
Defiling with the world my virgin heart,
My loved companion dropp'd a tear and fled,
And hid in deepest shades her awful head.
Beloved! who can tell me where thou art—
In what delicious Eden to be found—
That I may seek thee the wide world around?

Since writing it, I have found in a poem by Hamilton of Bangor, these two lines to "Happiness":—

> "Nun, sober and devout, where art thou fled
> To hide in shades thy meek, contented head?"

Lines eminently beautiful; but I do not remember having read them previously, for the credit of my tenth and eleventh lines. Parnell has two lines (which probably suggested the above) to "Contentment":

> "Whither, ah! whither art thou fled,
> To hide thy meek, contented head?"

Cowley's exquisite "Elegy on the death of his friend Harvey," suggested the phrase of "we two."

> "Was there a tree that did not know
> The love betwixt us two?"

So much for acknowledged plagiarisms, the confession of which I know not whether it has more of vanity or modesty in it. As to my blank verse, I am so dismally slow and sterile of ideas (I speak from my heart) that I much question if it will ever come to any issue. I have hitherto only hammered out a few independent, unconnected snatches, not in a capacity to be sent. I am very ill, and will rest till I have read your poems, for which I am very thankful. I have one more favour to beg of you, that you never mention Mr May's affair in any sort, much less *think* of repaying. Are we not flocci-nauci-what-d'ye-call-'em-ists? We have just learned that my poor brother has had a sad accident: a large stone, blown down by yesterday's high wind, has bruised his leg in a most shocking manner; he is under the care of Cruikshanks. Coleridge! there are 10,000 objections against my paying you a visit at Bristol; it cannot be else; but in this world 'tis better not to think too much of pleasant possibles, that we may not be out of humour with present insipids. Should any thing bring you to London, you will recollect No. 7, Little Queen Street, Holborn.

I shall be too ill to call on Wordsworth myself, but will take care to transmit him his poem, when I have read it. I saw Le Grice the day before his departure, and mentioned incidentally his "teaching the young idea how to shoot." Knowing him and the probability there is of people having a propensity to pun in his company, you will not wonder that we both stumbled on the same pun at once, he eagerly anticipating me,—"he would teach him to shoot!" Poor le Grice! if wit alone could entitle a man to respect, &c., he has written a very witty little pamphlet lately, satirical upon college declamations. When I send White's book, I will add that. I am sorry there should be any difference between you and Southey. "Between you two there should be peace," tho' I must say I have borne him no good will since he spirited you away from among us. What is become of Moschus? You sported some of his sublimities, I see, in your *Watchman*. Very decent things. So much for to-night from your afflicted, headachey, sorethroaty, humble servant, C. Lamb.

Tuesday Night.—Of your *Watchman*, the Review of Burke was the best prose. I augured great things from the first Number. There is some exquisite poetry interpersed. I have re-read the extract from the *Religious Musings*, and retract whatever invidious there was in my censure of it as elaborate. There are times when one is not in a disposition thoroughly to relish good writing. I have re-read it in a more favourable moment, and hesitate not to pronounce it sublime. If there be any thing in it approaching to tumidity, (which I meant not to infer: by *elaborate* I meant simply laboured,) it is the gigantic hyperbole by which you describe the evils of existing society: "snakes, lions, hyenas, and behemoths," is carrying your resentment beyond bounds. The pictures of the "The Simoom," of "Frenzy and Ruin," of "The

Whore of Babylon," and "The Cry of the Foul Spirits disherited of Earth," and "the strange beatitude" which the good man shall recognise in heaven, as well as the particularizing of the children of wretchedness, (I have unconsciously included every part of it,) form a variety of uniform excellence. I hunger and thirst to read the poem complete. That is a capital line in your sixth Number:

"This dark, frieze-coated, hoarse, teeth-chattering month."

They are exactly such epithets as Burns would have stumbled on, whose poem on the ploughed-up daisy you seem to have had in mind. Your complaint that some of your readers thought there was too much, some too little original matter in your Numbers, reminds me of poor dead Parsons in the *Critic*. "Too little incident! Give me leave to tell you, sir, there is too much incident." I had like to have forgot thanking you for that exquisite little morsel, the first Sclavonian Song. The expression in the second,—"more happy to be unhappy in hell": is it not very quaint? Accept my thanks, in common with those of all who love good poetry, for "The Braes of Yarrow." I congratulate you on the enemies you must have made by your splendid invective against the barterers in human flesh and sinews. Coleridge! you will rejoice to hear that Cowper is recovered from his lunacy, and is employed on his translation of the Italian, &c., poems of Milton for an edition where Fuseli presides as designer. Coleridge! to an idler like myself, to write and receive letters are both very pleasant; but I wish not to break in upon your valuable time by expecting to hear very frequently from you. Reserve that obligation for your moments of lassitude, when you have nothing else to do: for your loco-restive and all your idle propensities, of course, have given way to the duties of providing for a family. The mail is come in, but no parcel; yet

this is Tuesday. Farewell, then, till to-morrow; for a niche and a nook I must leave for criticisms. By the way, I hope you do not send your only copy of *Joan of Arc*: I will in that case return it immediately.

Your parcel *is* come: you have been *lavish* of your presents.

Wordsworth's poem I have hurried through, not without delight. Poor Lovell! my heart almost accuses me for the light manner I lately spoke of him, not dreaming of his death. My heart bleeds for your accumulated troubles: God send you through 'em with patience. I conjure you dream not that I will ever think of being repaid; the very word is galling to the ears. I have read all your *Religious Musings* with uninterrupted feelings of profound admiration. You may safely rest your fame on it. The best remaining things are what I have before read, and they lose nothing by my recollection of your manner of reciting 'em, for I too bear in mind "the voice, the look" of absent friends, and can occasionally mimic their manner for the amusement of those who have seen 'em. Your impassioned manner of recitation I can recall at any time to mine own heart and to the ears of the bystanders. I rather wish you had left the monody on Chatterton concluding, as it did, abruptly. It had more of unity. The conclusion of your *Religious Musings*, I fear, will entitle you to the reproof of your beloved woman, who wisely will not suffer your fancy to run riot, but bids you walk humbly with your God. The last words,

> "I discipline my young and novice thought
> In ministeries of heart-stirring song,"

though not now new to me, cannot be enough admired. To speak politely, they are a well-turned compliment to Poetry. I hasten to read *Joan of Arc*, &c. I have read your lines at the beginning of the second book: they are worthy of Milton; but in my

mind yield to your *Religious Musings*. I shall read the whole carefully, and in some future letter take the liberty to particularize my opinions of it. Of what is new to me among your poems next to the "Musings," that beginning "My Pensive Sara" gave me most pleasure: the lines in it I just alluded to are most exquisite; they made my sister and self smile, as conveying a pleasing picture of Mrs C. checking your wild wanderings, which we were so fond of hearing you indulge when among us. It has endeared us more than any thing to your good lady; and your own self-reproof that follows, delighted us. 'Tis a charming poem throughout. (You have well remarked that *charming*, *admirable*, *exquisite* are the words expressive of feelings more than conveying of ideas; else I might plead very well want of room in my paper as excuse for generalising.) I want room to tell you how we are charmed with your verses in the manner of Spenser, &c., &c., &c., &c., &c. I am glad you resume the *Watchman*. Change the name: leave out all articles of news, and whatever things are peculiar to newspapers, and confine yourself to ethics, verse, criticism; or, rather do not confine yourself. Let your plan be as diffuse as the *Spectator*, and I'll answer for it the work prospers. If I am vain enough to think I can be a contributor; rely on my inclinations. Coleridge! in reading your *Religious Musings* I felt a transient superiority over you. I *have* seen Priestley. I love to see his name repeated in your writings. I love and honour him, almost profanely. You would be charmed with his *Sermons*, if you never read 'em. You have doubtless read his books illustrative of the doctrine of Necessity. Prefixed to a late work of his, in answer to Paine, there is a Preface, giving an account of the man, and his services to men, written by Lindsey, his dearest friend, well worth your reading.

Tuesday Eve.—Forgive my prolixity, which is yet

too brief for all I could wish to say. God give you comfort, and all that are of your household! Our loves and best good wishes to Mrs C.

C. Lamb.

III. TO THE SAME

Friday, June 10, 1796.

With *Joan of Arc* I have been delighted, amazed. I had not presumed to expect any thing of such excellence from Southey. Why, the poem is alone sufficient to redeem the character of the age we live in from the imputation of degenerating in Poetry, were there no such beings extant as Burns, and Bowles, Cowper, and ——: fill up the blank how you please; I say nothing. The subject is well chosen. It opens well. To become more particular, I will notice in their order a few passages that chiefly struck me on perusal. Page 26, "Fierce and terrible Benevolence!" is a phrase full of grandeur and originality. The whole context made me feel *possessed*, even like Joan herself. Page 28, "It is most horrible with the keen sword to gore the finely-fibred human frame," and what follows, pleased me mightily. In the 2nd Book, the first forty lines in particular are majestic and high-sounding. Indeed the whole vision of the Palace of Ambition and what follows are supremely excellent. Your simile of the Laplander,

> ——————"by Niemi lake
> Or Balda Zhiok, or the mossy stone
> Of Solfar-kapper,"

will bear comparison with any in Milton for fulness of circumstance and lofty pacedness of versification. Southey's similes, though many of 'em are capital, are all inferior. In one of his books, the simile of the oak in the storm occurs, I think, four times. To return: the light in which you view the heathen deities is accurate and beautiful. Southey's personifications in this book are so many fine and faultless pictures. I

was much pleased with your manner of accounting for the reason why monarchs take delight in war. At the 447th line you have placed Prophets and Enthusiasts cheek by jowl, on too intimate a footing for the dignity of the former. Necessarian-like-speaking, it is correct. Page 98, "Dead is the Douglas! cold thy warrior frame, illustrious Buchan," &c., are of kindred excellence with Gray's "Cold is Cadwallo's tongue," &c. How famously the Maid baffles the Doctors, Seraphic and Irrefragable, "with all their trumpery!" Page 126, the procession, the appearances of the Maid, of the Bastard Son of Orleans and of Tremouille, are full of fire and fancy, and exquisite melody of versification. The personifications from line 303 to 309, in the heat of the battle, had better been omitted; they are not very striking, and only encumber. The converse which Joan and Conrade hold on the banks of the Loire is altogether beautiful. Page 313, the conjecture that in dreams "all things are that seem," is one of those conceits which the Poet delights to admit into his creed; a creed, by the way, more marvellous and mystic than ever Athanasius dreamed of. Page 315, I need only *mention* those lines ending with "She saw a serpent gnawing at her heart!" They are good imitative lines, "he toiled and toiled, of toil to reap no end, but endless toil and never-ending woe." Page 347, Cruelty is such as Hogarth might have painted her. Page 361, all the passage about Love (where he seems to confound conjugal love with creating and preserving love) is very confused, and sickens me with a load of useless personifications; else that ninth Book is the finest in the volume—an exquisite combination of the ludicrous and the terrible: I have never read either, even in translation, but such I conceive to be the manner of Dante or Ariosto. The tenth Book is the most languid. On the whole, considering the celerity wherewith the poem was finished, I was astonished

at the infrequency of weak lines. I had expected to find it verbose. Joan, I think, does too little in battle; Dunois perhaps the same; Conrade too much. The anecdotes interspersed among the battles refresh the mind very agreeably, and I am delighted with the very many passages of simple pathos abounding throughout the poem; passages which the author of "Crazy Kate" might have written. Has not Master Southey, in his Preface, spoke very slightingly, and disparagingly of Cowper's Homer? What makes him reluctant to give Cowper his fame? And does not Southey use too often the expletives "did," and "does"? They have a good effect at times, but are too inconsiderable, or rather become blemishes, when they mark a style. On the whole, I expect Southey one day to rival Milton: I already deem him equal to Cowper, and superior to all living poets besides. What says Coleridge? The "Monody on Henderson" is *immensely good*: the rest of that little volume is *readable, and above mediocrity*. I proceed to a more pleasant task; pleasant because the poems are yours; pleasant because you impose the task on me; and pleasant, let me add, because it will confer a whimsical importance on me to sit in judgment upon your rhymes. First, though, let me thank you again and again, in my own and my sister's name, for your invitations. Nothing could give us more pleasure than to come, but (were there no other reasons) while my brother's leg is so bad it is out of the question. Poor fellow! he is very feverish and light-headed; but Cruikshanks has pronounced the symptoms favourable, and gives us every hope that there will be no need of amputation: God send not! We are necessarily confined with him all the afternoon and evening till very late, so that I am stealing a few minutes to write to you.

Thank you for your frequent letters: you are the only correspondent, and, I might add, the only friend I have in the world. I go nowhere, and have no

acquaintance. Slow of speech, and reserved of manners, no one seeks or cares for my society; and I am left alone. Allen calls only occasionally, as though it were a duty rather, and seldom stays ten minutes. Then judge how thankful I am for your letters! Do not, however, burthen yourself with the correspondence. I trouble you again so soon, only in obedience to your injunctions. Complaints apart, proceed we to our task. I am called away to tea; thence must wait upon my brother; so must delay till to-morrow. Farewell!—*Wednesday.*

Thursday.—I will first notice what is new to me. Thirteenth page: "The thrilling tones that concentrate the soul" is a nervous line; and the first six lines of page 14 are very pretty; the twenty-first effusion is a perfect thing. That in the manner of Spenser is very sweet, particularly at the close: the thirty-fifth effusion is most exquisite; that line in particular, "And, tranquil, muse upon tranquillity." It is the very reflex pleasure that distinguishes the tranquillity of a thinking being from that of a shepherd, a modern one I would be understood to mean, a Damætas, one that keeps other people's sheep. Certainly, Coleridge, your letter from Shurton Bars has less merit than most things in your volume; personally, it may chime in best with your own feelings, and therefore you love it best. It has however, great merit. In your fourth epistle, *that* is an exquisite paragraph, and fancy-full, of "A stream there is which rolls in lazy flow," &c., &c. "Murmurs sweet undersong 'mid jasmine bowers" is a sweet line; and so are the three next. The concluding simile is far-fetched—"tempest honoured" is a quaintish phrase. Of the Monody on H[artley] I will here only notice these lines, as superlatively excellent. That energetic one, "Shall I not praise thee, scholar, Christian, friend," like to that beautiful

S. T. Coleridge, ætat 26,
from a pastel sketch taken in Germany.

climax of Shakspeare's, "King, Hamlet, Royal Dane, Father"; "yet memory turns from little men to thee," "And sported careless round their fellow child." The whole, I repeat, is immensely good.

Yours is a poetical family. I was much surprised and pleased to see the signature of Sara to that elegant composition, the fifth epistle. I dare not *criticise* the *Religious Musings*: I like not to select any part, where all is excellent. I can only admire, and thank you for it in the name of a Christian, as well as a lover of good poetry: only let me ask, Is not that thought and those words in Young, "stands in the sun,"—or is it only such as Young, in one of his *better moments*, might have writ?—

> "Believe thou, O my soul,
> Life is a vision, shadowy of Truth;
> And vice, and anguish, and the wormy grave,
> Shapes of a dream!"

I thank you for these lines in the name of a necessarian, and for what follows in the next paragraph, in the name of a child of fancy. After all, you cannot, nor ever will, write any thing with which I shall be so delighted as what I have heard yourself repeat. You came to town, and I saw you at a time when your heart was yet bleeding with recent wounds. Like yourself, I was sore galled with disappointed hope. You had

> ——"many an holy lay
> That, mourning, soothed the mourner on his way."

I had ears of sympathy to drink them in, and they yet vibrate pleasant on the sense. When I read in your little volume, your nineteenth effusion, or the twenty-eighth or twenty-ninth, or what you call the "Sigh," I think I hear *you* again. I image to myself the little smoky room at the *Salutation and Cat*, where we have sat together through the winter nights, beguiling the cares of life with Poesy. When

you left London I felt a dismal void in my heart. I found myself cut off, at one and the same time, from two most dear to me. "How blest with ye the path could I have trod of quiet life!" In your conversation you had blended so many pleasant fancies that they cheated me of my grief. But in your absence the tide of melancholy rushed in again, and did its worst mischief by overwhelming my reason. I have recovered, but feel a stupor that makes me indifferent to the hopes and fears of this life. I sometimes wish to introduce a religious turn of mind; but habits are strong things, and my religious fervours are confined, alas! to some fleeting moments of occasional solitary devotion. A correspondence, opening with you, has roused me a little from my lethargy, and made me conscious of existence. Indulge me in it: I will not be very troublesome. At some future time I will amuse you with an account, as full as my memory will permit, of the strange turn my frenzy took. I look back upon it at times with a gloomy kind of envy: for, while it lasted, I had many, many hours of pure happiness. Dream not, Coleridge, of having tasted all the grandeur and wildness of fancy till you have gone mad! All now seems to me vapid, comparatively so. Excuse this selfish digression. Your "Monody" is so superlatively excellent, that I can only wish it perfect, which I can't help feeling it is not quite. Indulge me in a few conjectures. What I am going to propose would make it more compressed, and, I think, more energetic, though I am sensible at the expense of many beautiful lines. Let it begin "Is this the land of song-ennobled line?" and proceed to "Otway's famish'd form"; then, "Thee, Chatterton," to "harps of Seraphim"; then, "clad in Nature's rich array," to "orient day"; then "but soon the scathing lightning," to "blighted land"; then, "sublime of thought," to "his bosom glows"; then

"But soon upon his poor unshelter'd head
Did Penury her sickly mildew shed,
Ah! where are fled the charms of early Grace,
And Joy's wild gleams that lighten'd o'er his face?"

Then "youth of tumultuous soul" to "sigh," as before. The rest may all stand down to "gaze upon the waves below." What follows now may come next as detached verses, suggested by the Monody, rather than a part of it. They are indeed, in themselves, very sweet:

"And we, at sober eve, would round thee throng,
Would hang, enraptured, on thy stately song."

in particular, perhaps. If I am obscure, you may understand me by counting lines. I have proposed omitting twenty-four lines. I feel that thus compressed it would gain energy, but think it most likely you will not agree with me: for who shall go about to bring opinions to the bed of Procrustes, and introduce among the sons of men a monotony of identical feelings? I only propose with diffidence. Reject, if you please, with as little remorse as you would the colour of a coat or the pattern of a buckle, where our fancies differed. The lines "Friend to the Friendless," &c., which you may think rudely disbranched from the Chatterton, will patch in with the Man of Ross, where they were at once at home, with two more which I recollect,

"And o'er the dowried virgin's snowy cheek
Bade bridal Love suffuse his blushes meek,"

very beautiful.

The "Pixies" is a perfect thing; and so are the "Lines on the Spring," page 28. The "Epitaph on an Infant," like a Jack-o'-lantern, has danced about (or like Dr Forster's scholars) out of the *Morning Chronicle* into the *Watchman*, and thence back into your Collection. It is very pretty, and you seem to

think so; but, may be, have o'erlooked its chief merit, that of filling up a whole page. I had once deemed Sonnets of unrivalled use that way; but your Epitaphs, I find, are the more diffuse. "Edmund" still holds its place among your best verses. "Ah! fair delights" to "roses round," in your Poem called "Absence," recall (none more forcibly) to my mind the tones in which *you recited it*. I will not notice, in this tedious (to you) manner, verses which have been so long delightful to me, and which you already know my opinion of. Of this kind are Bowles, Priestley, and that most exquisite and most Bowles-like of all, the nineteenth effusion. It would have better ended with "agony of care": the last two lines are obvious and unnecessary, and you need not now make fourteen lines of it: now it is rechristened from a Sonnet to an Effusion. Schiller might have written the twentieth Effusion: 'tis worthy of him in any sense. I was glad to meet with those lines you sent me, when my sister was so ill: I had lost the copy, and I felt not a little proud of seeing my name in your verse. The "Complaint of Ninathoma" (first stanza in particular) is the best, or only good imitation, of Ossian I ever saw, your "Restless Gale" excepted. "To an Infant" is most sweet. Is not "foodful," though, very harsh? Would not "dulcet" fruit be less harsh, or some other friendly bi-syllable? In "Edmund," "Frenzy, fierce-eyed child," is not so well as "frantic," though that is an epithet adding nothing to the meaning. Slander *couching* was better than "squatting." In the "Man of Ross" it *was* a better line thus:

"If 'neath this roof thy wine-cheer'd moments pass,"

than as it stands now. Time nor nothing can reconcile me to the concluding five lines of "Kosciusko": call it any thing you will but sublime. In my twelfth effusion I would rather have seen what I wrote myself,

though they bear no comparison with your exquisite lines—

"On rose-leaf'd beds, amid your faery bowers," &c.

I love my Sonnets because they are reflected images of my own feelings at different times. To instance, in the thirteenth—

"How reason reel'd," &c.,

are good lines, but must spoil the whole with me, who know it is only a fiction of yours, and that the "rude dashings" did in fact not "rock me to repose." I grant the same objection applies not to the former Sonnet; but still I love my own feelings: they are dear to memory, though they now and then wake a sigh or a tear. "Thinking on divers things foredone," I charge you, Coleridge, spare my ewe lambs; and though a gentleman may borrow six lines in an epic poem, (I should have no objection to borrow five hundred, and without acknowledging,) still, in a sonnet, a personal poem, I do not "ask my friend the aiding verse." I would not wrong your feelings, by proposing any improvements (did I think myself capable of suggesting 'em) in such personal poems as "Thou bleedest, my poor heart!"—'od so,—I am caught—I have already done it; but that simile I propose abridging, would not change the feeling or introduce any alien ones. Do you understand me? In the twenty-eight, however, and in the "Sigh," and that composed at Clevedon, things that come from the heart direct, not by the medium of the fancy, I would not suggest an alteration. When my blank verse is finished, or any long fancy poems, *propino tibi alterandum, cut-up-andum, abridgandum,* just what you will with it; but spare my ewe lambs! That to "Mrs Siddons," now, you were welcome to improve, if it had been worth it: but I say unto you again, Coleridge, spare my ewe lambs! I must con-

fess were they mine, I should omit, *in editione secundâ*, Effusions two and three, because satiric, and below the dignity of the poet of *Religious Musings*, fifth, seventh, half of the eighth, that "Written in early youth," as far as "thousand eyes,"—though I part not unreluctantly with that lively line—

"Chaste joyance dancing in her bright blue eyes,"

and one or two more just thereabouts. But I would substitute for it that sweet poem called "Recollection," in the fifth Number of the *Watchman*; better, I think, than the remainder of this poem, though not differing materially: as the poem now stands it looks altogether confused. And do not omit those lines upon the "Early Blossom," in your sixth Number of the *Watchman*: and I would omit the tenth Effusion or, what would do better, alter and improve the last four lines. In fact, I suppose, if they were mine, I should *not* omit 'em; but your verse is, for the most part, so exquisite, that I like not to see aught of meaner matter mixed with it. Forgive my petulance, and often, I fear, ill-founded criticisms; and forgive me that I have, by this time, made your eyes and head ache with my long letter; but I cannot forego hastily the pleasure and pride of thus conversing with you. You did not tell me whether I was to include the *Conciones ad Populum* in my remarks on your poems. They are not unfrequently sublime; and I think you could not do better than to turn 'em into verse, if you have nothing else to do. Allen, I am sorry to say, is a *confirmed* Atheist. Stoddart, a cold-hearted, well-bred, conceited disciple of Godwin, does him no good. His wife has several daughters, (one of 'em as old as himself). Surely there is something unnatural in such a marriage.

How I sympathize with you on the dull duty of a reviewer, and heartily damn with you Ned Evans and the Prosodist. I shall, however, wait impatiently for

the articles in the *Critical Review*, next month, because they are *yours*. Young Evans (W. Evans, a branch of a family you were once so intimate with) is come into our office, and sends his love to you! Coleridge, I devoutly wish that Fortune, who has made sport with you so long, may play one freak more,—throw you into London, or some spot near it, and there snug-ify you for life. 'Tis a selfish, but natural wish for me, cast as I am, "on life's wide plain, friendless." Are you acquainted with Bowles? I see, by his last Elegy, (written at Bath,) you are near neighbours.—*Thursday.*

"And I can think I can see the groves again—was it the voice of thee—turns not the voice of thee, my buried friend—who dries with her dark locks the tender tear," are touches as true to Nature as any in his other Elegy, written at the Hot Wells, about poor Kassell, &c. You are doubtless acquainted with it.

I do not know that I entirely agree with you in your stricture upon my Sonnet "To Innocence." To men whose hearts are not quite deadened by their commerce with the world, innocence (no longer familiar) becomes an awful idea. So I felt when I wrote it. Your other censures (qualified and sweetened, though, with praises somewhat extravagant) I perfectly coincide with; yet I choose to retain the word "lunar." Indulge a "lunatic" in his loyalty to his mistress the Moon! I have just been reading a most pathetic copy of verses on Sophia Pringle, who was hanged and burnt for coining. One of the strokes of pathos (which are very many, all somewhat obscure,) is "She lifted up her guilty forger to heaven." A note explains, by "forger," her right hand, with which she forged or coined the base metal. For "pathos" read *bathos*. You have put me out of conceit with my blank verse by your *Religious Musings*. I think it will come to nothing. I do not like 'em enough to send 'em. I have just been reading a book

which I may be too partial to, as it was the delight of my childhood; but I will recommend it to you: it is Izaak Walton's *Complete Angler*. All the scientific part you may omit in reading. The dialogue is very simple, full of pastoral beauties, and will charm you. Many pretty old verses are interspersed. This letter, which would be a week's work reading only, I do not wish you to answer it in less than a month. I shall be richly content with a letter from you some day early in July; though if you get any how *settled* before then, pray let me know it immediately; 'twould give me so much satisfaction. Concerning the Unitarian chapel, the salary is the only scruple that the most rigid moralist would admit as valid. Concerning the tutorage, is not the salary low, and absence from your family unavoidable? London is the only fostering soil for genius. Nothing more occurs just now; so I will leave you, in mercy, one small white spot empty below, to repose your eyes upon, fatigued as they must be with the wilderness of words they have by this time painfully travelled through. God love you, Coleridge, and prosper you through life; though mine will be loss if your lot is to be cast at Bristol, or at Nottingham, or anywhere but London. Our loves to Mrs C—. C. L.

IV. TO THE SAME

Monday Night, June 13, 1796.

Unfurnished at present with any sheet-filling subject, I shall continue my letter gradually and journal-wise. My second thoughts entirely coincide with your comments on *Joan of Arc* and I can only wonder at my childish judgment which overlooked the 1st book, and could prefer the 9th: not that I was insensible to the soberer beauties of the former; but the latter caught me with its glare of magic: the former, however, left a more pleasing general recol-

lection in my mind. Let me add, the 1st book was the favourite of my sister; and *I* now, with Joan, often "think on Domremi and the fields of Arc." I must not pass over without acknowledging my obligations to your full and satisfactory account of personifications. I have read it again and again, and it will be a guide to my future taste. Perhaps I had estimated Southey's merits too much by number, weight, and measure. I now agree completely and entirely in your opinion of the genius of Southey. Your own image of Melancholy is illustrative of what you teach, and in itself masterly. I conjecture it is "disbranched" from one of your embryo "hymns." When they are mature of birth (were I you) I should print 'em, in one separate volume, with *Religious Musings*, and your part of the *Joan of Arc*. Birds of the same soaring wing should hold on their flight in company. Once for all, (and by renewing the subject you will only renew in me the condemnation of Tantalus,) I hope to be able to pay you a visit (if you are then at Bristol) some time in the latter end of August or beginning of September, for a week or fortnight: before that time office business puts an absolute veto on my coming.

"And if a sigh that speaks regret of happier times appear,
A glimpse of joy that we have met shall shine and dry the tear."

Of the blank verses I spoke of, the following lines are the only tolerably complete ones I have writ out of not more than one hundred and fifty. That I get on so slowly you may fairly impute to want of practice in composition, when I declare to you that (the few verses which you have seen excepted) I have not writ fifty lines since I left school. It may not be amiss to remark that my grandmother (on whom the verses are written) lived housekeeper in a family the fifty or sixty last years of her life—that she was a woman of exemplary piety and goodness—and for many years

before her death was terribly afflicted with a cancer in her breast, which she bore with true Christian patience. You may think that I have not kept enough apart the ideas of her heavenly and her earthly master: but recollect I have designedly given in to her own way of feeling; and if she had a failing 'twas that she respected her master's family too much, not reverenced her Maker too little. The lines begin imperfectly, as I may probably connect 'em if I finish at all: and if I do, Biggs shall print 'em, (in a more economical way than you yours,) for, Sonnets and all, they won't make a thousand lines as I propose completing 'em, and the substance must be wire-drawn.

Tuesday Evening, June 14, 1796.

I am not quite satisfied now with the Chatterton, and, with your leave, will try my hand at it again. A master joiner, you know, may leave a cabinet to be finished by his journeyman, when his own hands are full.

To your list of illustrative personifications, into which a fine imagination enters, I will take leave to add the following from Beaumont and Fletcher's *Wife for a Month*; 'tis the conclusion of a description of a sea fight:—"The game of *death* was never played so nobly: the meagre thief grew wanton in his mischiefs; and his shrunk, hollow eyes smiled on his ruins." There is fancy in these of a lower order, from *Bonduca*;—"Then did I see these valiant men of Britain, like boding owls creep into tods of ivy, and hoot their fears to one another nightly." Not that it is a personification; only it just caught my eye in a little extract book I keep, which is full of quotations from Beaumont and Fletcher in particular, in which authors I can't help thinking there is a greater richness of poetical fancy than in any one, Shakspeare excepted. Are you acquainted with Massinger? At

a hazard I will trouble you with a passage from a play of his called *A Very Woman*. The lines are spoken by a lover (disguised) to his faithless mistress. You will remark the fine effect of the double endings. You will by your ear distinguish the lines, for I write 'em as prose. "Not far from where my father lives, *a lady*, a neighbour by, blest with as great a *beauty* as Nature durst bestow without *undoing*, dwelt, and most happily, as I thought then, and blest the house a thousand times she *dwelt* in. This beauty, in the blossom of my youth, when my first fire knew no adulterate *incense*, nor I no way to flatter but my *fondness*; in all the bravery my friends could *show me*, in all the faith my innocence could *give me*, in the best language my true tongue could *tell me*, and all the broken sighs my sick heart *lend me*, I sued and served. Long did I serve this *lady*, long was my travail, long my trade to *win her*: with all the duty of my soul I SERVED HER." "Then she must love." "She did, but never me: she could not *love me*; she would not love, she hated, —more, she *scorn'd me*; and in so poor and base a way *abused me* for all my services, for all my *bounties*, so bold neglects flung on me." "What out of love, and worthy love, I *gave her*, (shame to her most unworthy mind!) to fools, to girls, to fiddlers, and her boys she flung, all in disdain of me." One more passage strikes my eye from Beaumont and Fletcher's *Palamon and Arcite*. One of 'em complains in prison:

> "This is all our world:
> We shall know nothing here but one another;
> Hear nothing but the clock that tells our woes.
> The vine shall grow, but we shall never see it."

Is not the last circumstance exquisite? I mean not to lay myself open by saying they exceed Milton, and perhaps Collins, in sublimity. But don't you conceive all poets, after Shakspeare, yield to 'em in variety of genius? Massinger treads close on their heels; but you are most probably as well acquainted with his

writings as your humble servant. My quotations, in that case, will only serve to show my barrenness of matter. Southey, in simplicity and tenderness, is excelled decidedly only, I think, by Beaumont and Fletcher—in his "Maid's Tragedy" and some parts of "Philaster" in particular, and elsewhere occasionally; and perhaps by Cowper in his "Crazy Kate," and in parts of his translation: such as the speeches of Hecuba and Andromache. I long to know your opinion of that translation. The Odyssey especially is surely very Homeric. What nobler than the appearance of Phœbus at the beginning of the Iliad—the lines ending with "Dread sounding, bounding on the silver bow!"

I beg you will give me your opinion of the translation; it afforded me high pleasure. As curious a specimen of translation as ever fell into my hands is a young man's in our office, of a French novel. What in the original was literally "amiable delusions of the fancy," he proposed to render "the fair frauds of the imagination!" I had much trouble in licking the book into any meaning at all. Yet did the knave clear fifty or sixty pounds by subscription and selling the copyright: the book itself not a week's work! To-day's portion of my journalising epistle has been very dull and poverty-stricken. I will here end.

Tuesday Night.—I have been drinking egg-hot and smoking Oronooko, (associated circumstances, which ever forcibly recall to my mind our evenings and nights at the *Salutation*). My eyes and brain are heavy and asleep, but my heart is awake; and if words came as ready as ideas, and ideas as feelings, I could say ten hundred kind things. Coleridge, you know not my supreme happiness at having one on earth (though counties separate us) whom I can call a friend. Remember you those tender lines of Logan's?—

" Our broken friendships we deplore,
And loves of youth that are no more;
No after-friendships e'er can raise
Th' endearments of our early days,
And ne'er the heart such fondness prove
As when we first began to love."

I am writing at random, and half-tipsy, what you may not *equally* understand, as you will be sober when you read it; but *my* sober and *my* half-tipsy hours you are alike a sharer in. Good night.

" Then up rose our bard, like a prophet in drink,
Craigdoroch, thou'lt soar when creation shall sink."
BURNS.

Thursday.—I am now in high hopes to be able to visit you, if perfectly convenient on your part, by the end of next month—perhaps the last week or fortnight in July. A change of scene and a change of faces would do me good, even if that scene were not to be Bristol, and those faces Coleridge's and his friends. In the words of Terence, a little altered, *Tædet me hujus quotidiani mundi*, I am heartily sick of the every-day scenes of life. I shall half wish you unmarried (don't show this to Mrs C.) for one evening only, to have the pleasure of smoking with you and drinking egg-hot in some little smoky room in a pot-house, for I know not yet how I shall like you in a decent room and looking quite happy. My best love and respects to Sara notwithstanding.

Yours sincerely,
CHARLES LAMB.

V. TO THE SAME

July 1st, 1796.

The first moment I can come I will; but my hopes of coming yet a while yet hang on a ticklish thread. The coach I come by is immaterial, as I shall so easily, by your direction, find ye out. My mother is grown so entirely helpless (not having any use of her limbs)

that Mary is necessarily confined from ever sleeping out, she being her bed-fellow. She thanks you though, and will accompany me in spirit. Most exquisite are the lines from Withers. Your own lines, introductory to your poem on "Self," run smoothly and pleasurably, and I exhort you to continue 'em. What shall I say to your "Dactyls"? They are what you would call good *per se*; but a parody on some of 'em is just now suggesting itself, and you shall have it rough and unlicked. I mark with figures the lines parodied :—

4.—Sorely your Dactyls do drag along limp-footed.
5.—Sad is the measure that hangs a clod round 'em so.
6.—Meagre and languid, proclaiming its wretchedness.
1.—Weary, unsatisfied, not a little sick of 'em.
11.—Cold is my tired heart, I have no charity.
2.—Painfully travelling thus over the rugged road.
7.—O begone, measure, half Latin, half English, then.
12.—Dismal your Dactyls are, God help ye, rhyming ones!

I possibly may not come this fortnight; therefore all thou hast to do is not to look for me any particular day, only to write word immediately, if at any time you quit Bristol, lest I come and Taffy be not at home. I *hope* I can come in a day or two; but young Savory, of my office, is suddenly taken ill in this very nick of time, and I must officiate for him till he can come to work again. Had the knave gone sick, and died, and putrefied, at any other time, philosophy might have afforded one comfort; but just now I have no patience with him. Quarles I am as great a stranger to as I was to Withers. I wish you would try and do something to bring our elder bards into more general fame. I writhe with indignation when, in books of criticism, where common-place quotation is heaped upon quotation, I find no mention of such men as Massinger, or Beaumont and Fletcher,—men with whom succeeding dramatic writers (Otway alone excepted) can bear no manner of comparison. Stupid Knox hath noticed none of 'em among his extracts.

Thursday.—Mrs C—— can scarce guess how she has gratified me by her very kind letter and sweet little poem. I feel that I *should* thank her in rhyme; but she must take my acknowledgment, at present, in plain honest prose. The uncertainty in which I yet stand, whether I can come or no, damps my spirits, reduces me a degree below prosaical, and keeps me in a suspense that fluctuates between hope and fear. Hope is a charming, lively, blue-eyed wench, and I am always glad of her company, but could dispense with the visitor she brings with her—her younger sister, Fear,—a white-livered, lily-cheeked, bashful, palpitating, awkward hussy, that hangs, like a green girl, at her sister's apron-strings, and will go with her whithersoever *she* goes. For the life and soul of me I could not improve those lines in your poem on the Prince and Princess; so I changed them to what you bid me, and left 'em at Perry's. I think 'em altogether good, and do not see why you were solicitous about *any* alteration. I have not yet seen, but will make it my business to see, to-day's *Chronicle*, for your verses on Horne Tooke. Dyer stanza'd him in one of the papers t'other day; but, I think, unsuccessfully. Tooke's friends' meeting was, I suppose, a dinner of condolence. I am not sorry to find you (for all Sara) immersed in clouds of smoke and metaphysics. You know I had a sneaking kindness for this last noble science, and you taught me some smattering of it. I look to become no mean proficient under your tuition. Coleridge, what do you mean by saying you wrote to me about Plutarch and Porphyry? I received no such letter, nor remember a syllable of the matter, yet am not apt to forget any part of your epistles, least of all, an injunction like that. I will cast about for 'em, tho' I am a sad hand to know what books are worth, and both those worthy gentleman are alike out of my line. To-morrow I shall be less suspensive, and in better cue to write; so good-bye at present.

Friday Evening.—That execrable aristocrat and knave, Richardson, has given me an absolute refusal of leave. The *poor man* cannot guess at my disappointment. Is it not hard, "this dread dependence on the low-bred mind"? Continue to write to me tho', and I must be content. Our loves and best good wishes attend upon you both. LAMB.

Savory did return, but there are two or three more ill and absent, which was the plea for refusing me. I will never commit my peace of mind by depending on such a wretch for a favour in future, so I shall never have heart to ask for holidays again. The man next him in office, Cartwright, furnished him with the objections. C. LAMB.

VI. TO THE SAME

July 5, 1796.

[With verses "To Sara and her Samuel" enclosed.]

Let us prose.

What can I do till you send word what priced and placed house you should like? Islington, possibly, you would not like; to me 'tis classical ground. Knightsbridge is a desirable situation for the air of the parks. St George's Fields is convenient for its contiguity to the Bench. Choose! But are you really coming to town? The hope of it has entirely disarmed my petty disappointment of its nettles; yet I rejoice so much on my own account, that I fear I do not feel enough pure satisfaction on yours. Why, surely, the joint editorship of the [*Morning*] *Chronicle* must be a very comfortable and secure living for a man. But should not you read French, or do you? and can you write with sufficient moderation, as 'tis called, when one supresses the one half of what one feels or could say on a subject, to chime in the better with popular lukewarmness? White's "Letters" are

near publication. Could you review 'em, or get 'em reviewed? Are you not connected with the *Critical Review*? His frontispiece is a good conceit: Sir John learning to dance to please Madame Page, in dress of doublet, &c., forms the upper half; and modern pantaloons, with shoes, &c., of the eighteenth century, form the lower half; and the whole work is full of goodly quips and rare fancies, "all deftly masqued like hoar antiquity"—much superior to Dr Kenrick's *Falstaff's Wedding*, which you have seen. Allen sometimes laughs at superstition, and religion, and the like. A living fell vacant lately in the gift of the Hospital: White informed him that he stood a fair chance for it. He scrupled and scrupled about it, and at last, to use his own words, "tampered" with Godwin to know whether the thing was honest or not. Godwin said nay to it, and Allen rejected the living! Could the blindest poor papist have bowed more servilely to his priest or casuist? Why sleep the *Watchman's* answers to that Godwin? I beg you will not delay to alter, if you mean to keep, those last lines I sent you. Do that, and read these for your pains:—

TO THE POET COWPER

Cowper, I thank my God that thou art heal'd!
Thine was the sorest malady of all;
And I am sad to think that it should light
Upon thy worthy head! But thou art heal'd,
And thou art yet, we trust, the destined man,
Born to reanimate the lyre, whose chords
Have slumber'd, and have idle lain so long;
To the immortal sounding of whose strings
Did Milton frame the stately-pacèd verse;
Among whose wires with light finger playing,
Our elder bard, Spenser, a gentle name,
The Lady Muses' dearest darling child,
Elicited the deftest tunes yet heard
In hall or bower, taking the delicate ear
Of Sidney and his peerless Maiden Queen.

Thou, then, take up the mighty epic strain,
Cowper, of England's Bards, the wisest and the best.

I have read your climax of praises in those three Reviews. These mighty spouters out of panegyric waters have, two of 'em, scattered their spray even upon me, and the waters are cooling and refreshing, Prosaically, the *Monthly* reviewers have made indeed a large article of it, and done you justice. The *Critical* have, in their wisdom, selected not the very best specimens, and notice not, except as one name on the muster-roll, the *Religious Musings*. I suspect Master Dyer to have been the writer of that article, as the substance of it was the very remarks and the very language he used to me one day. I fear you will not accord entirely with my sentiments of Cowper, as *expressed* above, (perhaps scarcely just;) but the poor gentleman has just recovered from his lunacies, and that begets pity, and pity love, and love admiration; and then it goes hard with people, but they lie! Have you read the Ballad called "Leonora," in the second number of the *Monthly Magazine*? If you have!!!! There is another fine song, from the same author (Burger), in the third Number, of scarce inferior merit; and (vastly below these) there are some happy specimens of English hexameters, in an imitation of Ossian, in the fifth Number. For your Dactyls—I am sorry you are so sore about 'em—a very Sir Fretful! In good troth, the Dactyls are good Dactyls, but their measure is naught. Be not yourself "half anger, half agony," if I pronounce your darling lines not to be the best you ever wrote —you have written much.

Have a care, good Master Poet, of the Statute *de Contumeliâ*. What do you mean by calling Madame Mara "harlot" and other naughty things? The goodness of the verse would not save you in a Court of Justice. But are you really coming to town? Coleridge, a gentleman called in London lately from Bristol, and inquired whether there were any of the family of a Mr Chambers living: this Mr Chambers,

he said, had been the making of a friend's fortune, who wished to make some return for it. He went away without seeing her. Now, a Mrs Reynolds, a very intimate friend of ours, whom you have seen at our house, is the only daughter, and all that survives, of Mr Chambers; and a very little supply would be of service to her, for she married very unfortunately, and has parted with her husband. Pray find out this Mr Pember, (for that was the gentleman's friend's name:) he is an attorney, and lives at Bristol. Find him out, and acquaint him with the circumstances of the case, and offer to be the medium of supply to Mrs Reynolds, if he chooses to make her a present. She is in very distressed circumstances. Mr Pember, attorney, Bristol. Mr Chambers lived in the Temple; Mrs Reynolds, his daughter, was my schoolmistress, and is in the room at this present writing. This last circumstance induced me to write so soon again. I have not further to add. Our loves to Sara. C. Lamb.

Thursday.

VII. TO THE SAME

September 27th, 1796.

My dearest Friend,—White, or some of my friends, or the public papers, by this time may have informed you of the terrible calamities that have fallen on our family. I will only give you the outlines:—My poor dear, dearest sister, in a fit of insanity, has been the death of her own mother. I was at hand only time enough to snatch the knife out of her grasp. She is at present in a madhouse, from whence I fear she must be moved to an hospital. God has preserved to me my senses: I eat, and drink, and sleep, and have my judgment, I believe, very sound. My poor father was slightly wounded, and I am left to take care of him and my aunt. Mr Norris, of the Blue-coat School, has been very kind to us, and we have

no other friend; but, thank God, I am very calm and composed, and able to do the best that remains to do. Write as religious a letter as possible, but no mention of what is gone and done with. With me "the former things are passed away," and I have something more to do than to feel.

God Almighty have us all in His keeping!

C. LAMB.

Mention nothing of poetry. I have destroyed every vestige of past vanities of that kind. Do as you please, but if you publish, publish mine (I give free leave) without name or initial, and never send me a book, I charge you.

Your own judgment will convince you not to take any notice of this yet to your dear wife. You look after your family; I have my reason and strength left to take care of mine. I charge you, don't think of coming to see me. Write. I will not see you if you come. God Almighty love you and all of us!

C. LAMB.

VIII TO THE SAME

October 3rd, 1796.

My dearest Friend,—Your letter was an inestimable treasure to me. It will be a comfort to you, I know, to know that our prospects are somewhat brighter. My poor, dear, dearest sister, the unhappy and unconscious instrument of the Almighty's judgments on our house, is restored to her senses,—to a dreadful sense and recollection of what has past, awful to her mind, and impressive, (as it must be to the end of life,) but tempered with religious resignation and the reasonings of a sound judgment, which, in this early stage, knows how to distinguish between a deed committed in a transient fit of frenzy and the terrible guilt of a mother's murder. I have seen her. I found her, this morning, calm and

serene; far, very far from an indecent forgetful serenity: she has a most affectionate and tender concern for what has happened. Indeed, from the beginning—frightful and hopeless as her disorder seemed—I had confidence enough in her strength of mind and religious principle, to look forward to a time when *even she* might recover tranquillity. God be praised, Coleridge! wonderful as it is to tell, I have never once been otherwise than collected and calm; even on the dreadful day, and in the midst of the terrible scene, I preserved a tranquility which bystanders may have construed into indifference —a tranquillity not of despair. Is it folly or sin in me to say that it was a religious principle that *most* supported me? I allow much to other favourable circumstances. I felt that I had something else to do than to regret. On that first evening my aunt was lying insensible—to all appearance like one dying; my father, with his poor forehead plaistered over from a wound he had received from a daughter, dearly loved by him, and who loved him no less dearly; my mother a dead and murdered corpse in the next room; yet was I wonderfully supported. I closed not my eyes in sleep that night, but lay without terrors and without despair. I have lost no sleep since. I had been long used not to rest in things of sense,—had endeavoured after a comprehension of mind, unsatisfied with the "ignorant present time"; and *this* kept me up. I had the whole weight of the family thrown on me; for my brother, little disposed (I speak not without tenderness for him) at any time to take care of old age and infirmities, had now, with his bad leg, an exemption from such duties, and I was now left alone. One little incident may serve to make you understand my way of managing my mind: Within a day or two after the fatal one, we dressed for dinner a tongue, which we had had salted for some

weeks in the house. As I sat down, a feeling like remorse struck me: this tongue poor Mary got for me; and can I partake of it now, when she is far away? A thought occurred and relieved me:—if I give in to this way of feeling, there is not a chair, a room, an object in our rooms, that will not awaken the keenest griefs. I must rise above such weaknesses. I hope this was not want of true feeling. I did not let this carry me, though, too far. On the very second day (I date from the day of horrors), as is usual in such cases, there were a matter of twenty people, I do think, supping in our room: they prevailed on me to eat *with them* (for to eat I never refused). They were all making merry in the room! Some had come from friendship, some from busy curiosity, and some from interest. I was going to partake with them, when my recollection came that my poor dead mother was lying in the next room —the very next room;—a mother who, through life, wished nothing but her children's welfare. Indignation, the rage of grief, something like remorse, rushed upon my mind. In an agony of emotion I found my way mechanically to the adjoining room, and fell on my knees by the side of her coffin, asking forgiveness of Heaven, and sometimes of her, for forgetting her so soon. Tranquillity returned, and it was the only violent emotion that mastered me. I think it did me good.

I mention these things because I hate concealment, and love to give a faithful journal of what passes within me. Our friends have been very good. Sam Le Grice, who was then in town, was with me the first three or four days, and was as a brother to me; gave up every hour of his time, to the very hurting of his health and spirits, in constant attendance and humouring my poor father; talked with him, read to him, played at cribbage with him, (for so short is the old man's recollection, that he was playing at cards,

John Lamb (father of Charles Lamb),
reproduced from a lithograph by J. A. Vintner.

as though nothing had happened, while the coroner's inquest was sitting over the way!) Samuel wept tenderly when he went away, for his mother wrote him a very severe letter on his loitering so long in town, and he was forced to go. Mr Norris, of Christ's Hospital, has been as a father to me—Mrs Norris as a mother; though we had few claims on them. A gentleman, brother to my godmother, from whom we never had right or reason to expect any such assistance, sent my father twenty pounds; and to crown all these God's blessings to our family at such a time, an old lady, a cousin of my father and aunt's, a gentlewoman of fortune, is to take my aunt and make her comfortable for the short remainder of her days. My aunt is recovered, and as well as ever, and highly pleased at thoughts of going—and has generously given up the interest of her little money (which was formerly paid my father for her board) wholely and solely to my sister's use. Reckoning this, we have, Daddy and I, for our two selves and an old maid-servant to look after him, when I am out, which will be necessary, 170*l.* (or 180*l.* rather) a-year, out of which we can spare 50*l.* or 60*l.* at least for Mary while the stays at Islington, where she must and shall stay during her father's life, for his and her comfort. I know John will make speeches about it, but she shall not go into an hospital. The good lady of the madhouse, and her daughter, an elegant, sweet-behaved young lady, love her, and are taken with her amazingly; and I know from her own mouth she loves them, and longs to be with them as much. Poor thing, they say she was but the other morning saying, she knew she must go to Bethlem for life; that one of her brothers would have it so, but the other would wish it not, but be obliged to go with the stream; that she had often as she passed Bethlem thought it likely, "here it may be my fate to end my days," conscious of a certain flightiness in her poor head

oftentimes, and mindful of more than one severe illness of that nature before. A legacy of 100*l.*, which my father will have at Christmas, and this 20*l.* I mentioned before, with what is in the house, will much more than set us clear. If my father, an old servant-maid, and I, can't live, and live comfortably, on 130*l.* or 120*l.* a year, we ought to burn by slow fires; and I almost would, that Mary might not go into an hospital. Let me not leave one unfavourable impression on your mind respecting my brother. Since this has happened, he has been very kind and brotherly; but I fear for his mind: he has taken his ease in the world, and is not fit himself to struggle with difficulties, nor has much accustomed himself to throw himself into their way; and I know his language is already, "Charles, you must take care of yourself: you must not abridge yourself of a single pleasure you have been used to," &c., &c., and in that style of talking. But you, a Necessarian, can respect a difference of mind, and love what *is amiable* in a character not perfect. He has been very good; but I fear for his mind. Thank God, I can unconnect myself with him, and shall manage all my father's moneys in future myself, if I take charge of Daddy, which poor John has not even hinted a wish, at any future time even, to share with me. The lady at this madhouse assures me that I may dismiss immediately both doctor and apothecary, retaining occasionally a composing draught or so for a while; and there is a less expensive establishment in her house, where she will only not have a room and nurse to herself, for 50*l.* or guineas a-year—the outside would be 60*l.* You know, by economy, how much more even I shall be able to spare for her comforts. She will I fancy, if she stays, make one of the family, rather than of the patients; and the old and young ladies I like exceedingly, and she loves them dearly; and they, as the saying is, take to her very extraordinarily, if it is extraordinary that

people who see my sister should love her. Of all the people I ever saw in the world, my poor sister was most and thoroughly devoid of the least tincture of selfishness. I will enlarge upon her qualities, poor dear, dearest soul, in a future letter, for my own comfort, for I understand her thoroughly; and, if I mistake not, in the most trying situation that a human being can be found in, she will be found—(I speak not with sufficient humility, I fear,) but, humanly and foolishly speaking, she will be found, I trust, uniformly great and amiable. God keep her in her present mind!—to whom be thanks and praise for all His dispensations to mankind. C. Lamb.

These mentioned good fortunes and change of prospects had almost brought my mind over to the extreme, the very opposite to despair. I was in danger of making myself too happy. Your letter brought me back to a view of things which I had entertained from the beginning. I hope (for Mary I can answer)—but I hope that *I* shall through life never have less recollection nor a fainter impression of what has happened than I have now. 'Tis not a light thing, nor meant by the Almighty to be received lightly. I must be serious, circumspect, and deeply religious through life; and by such means may *both* of us escape madness in future, if it so please the Almighty.

Send me word how it fares with Sara. I repeat it, your letter was, and will be, an inestimable treasure to me. You have a view of what my situation demands of me, like my own view, and I trust a just one.

Coleridge, continue to write; but do not for ever offend me by talking of sending me cash. Sincerely, and on my soul, we do not want it. God love you both!

I will write again very soon. Do you write directly.

IX. TO THE SAME

October 17th, 1796.

My dearest Friend,—I grieve from my very soul to observe you, in your plans of life, veering about from this hope to the other, and settling nowhere. Is it an untoward fatality (speaking humanly) that does this for you—a stubborn, irresistible concurrence of events? or lies the fault, as I fear it does, in your own mind? You seem to be taking up splendid schemes of fortune only to lay them down again; and your fortunes are an *ignis fatuus* that has been conducting you, in thought, from Lancaster Court, Strand, to somewhere near Matlock; then jumping across to Dr Somebody's, whose son's tutor you were likely to be; and would to God the dancing demon *may* conduct you at last, in peace and comfort, to the "life and labours of a cottager." You see, from the above awkward playfulness of fancy, that my spirits are not quite depressed. I should ill deserve God's blessings, which, since the late terrible event, have come down in mercy upon us, if I indulged regret or querulousness. Mary continues serene and cheerful. I have not by me a little letter she wrote to me; for, though I see her almost every day, yet we delight to write to one another, for we can scarce see each other but in company with some of the people of the house.

I have not the letter by me, but will quote from memory what she wrote in it: "I have no bad terrifying dreams. At midnight, when I happen to awake, the nurse sleeping by the side of me, with the noise of the poor mad people around me, I have no fear. The spirit of my mother seems to descend and smile upon me, and bid me live to enjoy the life and reason which the Almighty has given me. I shall see her again in heaven: she will then understand me better. My grandmother, too, will understand me better, and will then say no more, as she used to do, 'Polly, what are those poor crazy

moythered brains of yours thinking of always?'" Poor Mary! my mother indeed *never understood* her right. She loved her, as she loved us all, with a mother's love; but in opinion, in feeling, and sentiment, and disposition, bore so distant a resemblance to her daughter, that she never understood her right; never could believe how much *she* loved her; but met her caresses, her protestations of filial affection too frequently with coldness and repulse. Still she was a good mother. God forbid I should think of her but *most* respectfully, *most* affectionately. Yet she would always love my brother above Mary, who was not worthy of one-tenth of that affection which Mary had a right to claim. But it is my sister's gratifying recollection that every act of duty and of love she could pay, every kindness, (and I speak true, when I say to the hurting of her health, and, most probably, in great part to the derangement of her senses), through a long course of infirmities and sickness, she could show her, she ever did. I will, some day, as I promised, enlarge to you upon my sister's excellences: 'twill seem like exaggeration; but I will do it. At present, short letters suit my state of mind best. So take my kindest wishes for your comfort and establishment in life, and for Sara's welfare and comforts with you! God love you! God love us all! C. LAMB.

X. TO THE SAME

October 24th, 1796.

Coleridge, I feel myself much your debtor for that spirit of confidence and friendship which dictated your last letter. May your soul find peace at last in your cottage life! I only wish you were but settled. Do continue to write to me. I read your letters with my sister, and they give us both abundance of delight. Especially they please us when you talk in

a religious strain: not but we are offended occasionally with a certain freedom of expression, a certain air of mysticism, more consonant to the conceits of pagan philosophy than consistent with the humility of genuine piety. To instance now, in your last letter you say, "It is by the press that God hath given finite spirits, both evil and good, (I suppose you mean *simply* bad men and good men,) a portion as it were of His Omnipresence"! Now, high as the human intellect comparatively will soar, and wide as its influence, malign or salutary, can extend, is there not, Coleridge, a distance between the Divine Mind and it, which makes such language blasphemy? Again, in your first fine consolatory epistle, you say, "you are a temporary sharer in human misery, that you may be an eternal partaker of the Divine Nature." What more than this do those men say who are for exalting the man Christ Jesus into the second person of an unknown Trinity?—men whom you or I scruple not to call idolaters. Man, full of imperfections at best, and subject to wants which momentarily remind him of dependence; man, a weak and ignorant being, "servile" from his birth "to all the skiey influences," with eyes sometimes open to discern the right path, but a head generally too dizzy to pursue it; man, in the pride of speculation, forgetting his nature, and hailing in himself the future God, must make the angels laugh. Be not angry with me, Coleridge: I wish not to cavil; I know I cannot instruct you; I only wish to remind you of that humanity which best becometh the Christian character. God, in the New Testament, (*our best guide*,) is represented to us in the kind, condescending, amiable, familiar light of a *parent*; and in my poor mind 'tis best for us so to consider of him, as our *heavenly* father, and our *best friend*, without indulging too bold conceptions of his nature. Let us learn to think humbly of ourselves, and rejoice in the appellation of

"dear children," "brethren," and "co-heirs with Christ of the promises," seeking to know no further.

I am not insensible, indeed I am not, of the value of that first letter of yours, and I shall find reason to thank you for it again and again, long after that blemish in it is forgotten. It will be a fine lesson of comfort to us, whenever we read it; and read it we often shall, Mary and I.

Accept our loves and best kind wishes for the welfare of yourself and wife and little one. Nor let me forget to wish you joy on your birth-day, so lately past; I thought you had been older. My kind thanks and remembrances to Lloyd.

God love us all!—and may He continue to be the father and the friend of the whole human race!

C. Lamb.

Sunday Evening.

XI. TO THE SAME

Oct. 28, 1796.

My dear friend,—I am not ignorant that to be "a partaker of the Divine Nature" is a phrase to be met with in Scripture: I am only apprehensive, lest we in these latter days, tinctured (some of us perhaps pretty deeply) with mystical notions and the pride of metaphysics, might be apt to affix to such phrases a meaning, which the primitive users of them, the simple fishermen of Galilee for instance, never intended to convey. With that other part of your apology I am not quite so well satisfied. You seem to me to have been straining your comparing faculties to bring together things infinitely distant and unlike, —the feeble narrow-sphered operations of the human intellect and the everywhere diffused mind of Deity, the peerless wisdom of Jehovah. Even the expression appears to me inaccurate—"portion of Omnipresence." Omnipresence is an attribute the very essence of which is unlimitedness. How can Omnipresence be affirmed of any thing in part? But

enough of this spirit of disputatiousness. Let us attend to the proper business of human life, and talk a little together respecting our domestic concerns. Do you continue to make me acquainted with what you are doing, and how soon you are likely to be settled, once for all.

I have satisfaction in being able to bid you rejoice with me in my sister's continued reason, and composedness of mind. Let us both be thankful for it. I continue to visit her very frequently, and the people of the house are vastly indulgent to her. She is likely to be as comfortably situated in all respects as those who pay twice or thrice the sum. They love her, and she loves them, and makes herself very useful to them. Benevolence sets out on her journey with a good heart, and puts a good face on it, but is apt to limp and grow feeble, unless she calls in the aid of self-interest, by way of crutch. In Mary's case, as far as respects those she is with, 'tis well that these principles are so likely to co-operate. I am rather at a loss sometimes for books for her: our reading is somewhat confined, and we have nearly exhausted our London library. She has her hands too full of work to read much; but a little she must read, for reading was her daily bread.

Have you seen Bowles's new poem on "Hope"? What character does it bear? Has he exhausted his stores of tender plaintiveness? or is he the same in this last as in all his former pieces? The duties of the day call me off from this pleasant intercourse with my friend: so for the present adieu.

Now for the truant borrowing of a few minutes from business. Have you met with a new poem called the *Pursuits of Literature*? From the extracts in the *British Review* I judge it to be a very humourous thing. In particular I remember what I thought a very happy character of Dr Darwin's poetry. Among all your quaint readings did you ever light

upon *Walton's Complete Angler*? I asked you the question once before: it breathes the very spirit of innocence, purity, and simplicity of heart. There are many choice old verses interspersed in it. It would sweeten a man's temper at any time to read it; it would Christianise every discordant angry passion. Pray make yourself acquainted with it. Have you made it up with Southey yet? Surely one of you two must have been a very silly fellow, and the other not much better, to fall out like boarding-school misses. Kiss, shake hands, and make it up.

When will he be delivered of his new epic? *Madoc*, I think, is to be the name of it; though that is a name not familiar to my ears. What progress do you make in your hymns? What Review are you connected with? If with any, why do you delay to notice White's book? You are justly offended at its profaneness; but surely you have undervalued its *wit*, or you would have been more loud in its praises. Do not you think that in *Slender's* death and madness there is most exquisite humour, mingled with tenderness, that is irresistible, truly Shakspearian? Be more full in your mention of it. Poor fellow, he has (very undeservedly) lost by it; nor do I see that it is likely ever to reimburse him the charge of printing, &c. Give it a lift, if you can. I suppose you know that Allen's wife is dead, and he, just situated as he was, never the better, as the worldly people say, for her death, her money with her children being taken off his hands. I am just now wondering whether you will ever come to town again, Coleridge; 'tis among the things I dare not hope, but can't help wishing. For myself, I can live in the midst of town luxury and superfluity, and not long for them, and I can't see why your children might not hereafter do the same. Remember, you are not in Arcadia when you are in the west of England, and they may catch infection from the world

without visiting the metropolis. But you seem to have set your heart upon this same cottage plan; and God prosper you in the experiment! I am at a loss for more to write about; so 'tis as well that I am arrived at the bottom of my paper.

God love you, Coleridge!—Our best loves and tenderest wishes await on you, your Sara, and your little one. C. L.

XII. TO THE SAME

Nov. 8, 1796.

My brother, my friend,—I am distress'd for you, believe me I am; not so much for your painful, troublesome complaint, which, I trust, is only for a time, as for those anxieties which brought it on, and perhaps even now may be nursing its malignity. Tell me, dearest of my friends, is your mind at peace? or has any thing, yet unknown to me, happened to give you fresh disquiet, and steal from you all the pleasant dreams of future rest? Are you still (I fear you are) far from being comfortably settled? Would to God it were in my power to contribute towards the bringing of you into the haven where you would be! But you are too well skilled in the philosophy of consolation to need my humble tribute of advice. In pain, and in sickness, and in all manner of disappointments, I trust you have that within you which shall speak peace to your mind. Make it, I entreat you, one of your puny comforts, that I feel for you, and share all your griefs with you. I feel as if I were troubling you about *little* things, now I am going to resume the subject of our last two letters; but it may divert us both from unpleasanter feelings to make such matters, in a manner, of importance. Without further apology, then, it was not that I did not relish, that I did not in my heart thank you for those little pictures of your feelings which you lately sent me, if I neglected to mention them. You may remember you had said

much the same things before to me on the same subject in a former letter, and I considered those last verses as only the identical thoughts better clothed; either way (in prose or verse) such poetry must be welcome to me. I love them as I love the Confessions of Rousseau, and for the same reason: the same frankness, the same openness of heart, the same disclosure of all the most hidden and delicate affections of the mind. They make me proud to be thus esteemed worthy of the place of friend-confessor, brother-confessor, to a man like Coleridge. This last is, I acknowledge, language too high for friendship; but it is also, I declare, too sincere for flattery. Now, to put on stilts, and talk magnificently about trifles,—I condescend, then, to your counsel, Coleridge, and allow my first Sonnet (sick to death am I to make mention of my Sonnets, and I blush to be so taken up with them, indeed I do); I allow it to run thus: *Fairy Land*, &c. &c., as I last wrote it.

The Fragments I now send you, I want printed to get rid of 'em; for, while they stick burr-like to my memory, they tempt me to go on with the idle trade of versifying, which I long (most sincerely I speak it) I long to leave off, for it is unprofitable to my soul; I feel it is; and these questions about words, and debates about alterations, take me off, I am conscious, from the properer business of my life. Take my Sonnets, once for all; and do not propose any re-amendments, or mention them again in any shape to me, I charge you. I blush that my mind can consider them as things of any worth. And, pray, admit or reject these fragments as you like or dislike them, without ceremony. Call 'em Sketches, Fragments, or what you will; but do not entitle any of my *things* Love Sonnets, as I told you to call 'em; 'twill only make me look little in my own eyes; for it is a passion of which I retain nothing. 'Twas a

weakness, concerning which I may say, in the words of Petrarch (whose Life is now open before me), "if it drew me out of some vices, it also prevented the growth of many virtues, filling me with the love of the creature rather than the Creator, which is the death of the soul." Thank God, the folly has left me for ever. Not even a review of my love verses renews one wayward wish in me; and if I am at all solicitous to trim 'em out in their best apparel, it is because they are to make their appearance in good company. Now to my fragments. Lest you have lost my "Grandame," she shall be one. 'Tis among the few verses I ever wrote: that to Mary is another, which profit me in the recollection. God love her! —and may we two never love each other less!

These, Coleridge, are the few sketches I have thought worth preserving. How will they relish thus detached? Will you reject all or any of them? They are thine: do whatsoever thou listest with them. My eyes ache with writing long and late, and I wax wondrous sleepy. God bless you and yours, me and mine! Good night. C. Lamb.

I will keep my eyes open reluctantly a minute longer to tell you that I love you for those simple, tender, heart-flowing lines with which you conclude your last, and in my eyes best, "Sonnet" (so you call 'em)—

> "So, for the mother's sake, the child was dear;
> And dearer was the mother for the child."

Cultivate simplicity, Coleridge; or rather, I should say, banish elaborateness: for simplicity springs spontaneous from the heart, and carries into daylight its own modest buds, and genuine, sweet, and clear flowers of expression. I allow no hot-beds in the gardens of Parnassus. I am unwilling to go to bed, and leave my sheet unfilled, (a good piece of night-work for an idle body like me,) so will finish with

begging you to send me the earliest account of your complaint, its progress, or (as I hope to God you will be able to send me) the tale of your recovery, or at least amendment. My tenderest remembrances to your Sara——

Once more, Good night.

XIII. TO THE SAME

Nov. 14, 1796.

Coleridge, I love you for dedicating your poetry to Bowles. Genius of the sacred fountain of tears, it was he who led you gently by the hand through all this valley of weeping; showed you the dark green yew trees, and the willow shades, where, by the fall of waters, you might indulge an uncomplaining melancholy, a delicious regret for the past, or weave fine visions of that awful future,

> "When all the vanities of life's brief day
> Oblivion's hurrying hand hath swept away,
> And all its sorrows, at the awful blast
> Of the archangel's trump, are but as shadows past."

I have another sort of dedication in my head for my few things, which I want to know if you approve of, and can insert. I mean to inscribe them to my sister. It will be unexpected, and it will give her pleasure; or do you think it will look whimsical at all? As I have not spoke to her about it, I can easily reject the idea. But there is a monotony in the affections, which people living together, or, as we do now, very frequently seeing each other, are apt to give in to; a sort of indifference in the expression of kindness for each other, which demands that we should sometimes call to our aid the trickery of surprise. Do you publish with Lloyd, or without him? In either case my little portion may come last; and after the fashion of orders to a country correspondent, I will give directions how I should like to have 'em done. The title-page to stand thus:—

POEMS

BY

CHARLES LAMB OF THE INDIA HOUSE

Under this title the following motto, which, for want of room, I put over leaf, and desire you to insert, whether you like it or no. May not a gentleman choose what arms, mottoes, or armorial bearings the Herald will give him leave, without consulting his republican friend, who might advise none? May not a publican put up the sign of the *Saracen's Head*, even though his undiscerning neighbour should prefer, as more genteel, the *Cat and Gridiron*?

[Motto]

"This beauty, in the blossom of my youth,
When my first fire knew no adulterate incense,
Nor I no way to flatter but my fondness,
In the best language my true tongue could tell me,
And all the broken sighs my sick heart lend me,
I sued and served. Long did I love this lady."—Massinger.

THE DEDICATION

THE FEW FOLLOWING POEMS,
CREATURES OF THE FANCY AND THE FEELING
IN LIFE'S MORE VACANT HOURS,
PRODUCED, FOR THE MOST PART, BY
LOVE IN IDLENESS,
ARE,
WITH ALL A BROTHER'S FONDNESS,
INSCRIBED TO
MARY ANNE LAMB,
THE AUTHOR'S BEST FRIEND AND SISTER.

This is the pomp and paraphernalia of parting, with which I take my leave of a passion which has reigned so royally (so long) within me; thus, with its trappings of laureatship, I fling it off, pleased and satis-

fied with myself that the weakness troubles me no longer. I am wedded, Coleridge, to the fortunes of my sister, and my poor old father. Oh, my friend! I think sometimes, could I recall the days that are past, which among them should I choose? not those "merrier days," not the "pleasant days of hope," not "those wanderings with a fair-hair'd maid," which I have so often and so feelingly regretted, but the days, Coleridge, of a *mother's* fondness for her *school-boy*. What would I give to call her back to earth for *one* day!—on my knees to ask her pardon for all those little asperities of temper which, from time to time, have given her gentle spirit pain!—and the day, my friend, I trust, will come. There will be "time enough" for kind offices of love, if "Heaven's eternal year" be ours. Hereafter, her meek spirit shall not reproach me. Oh, my friend, cultivate the filial feelings! and let no man think himself released from the kind "charities" of relationship: these shall give him peace at the last; these are the best foundation for every species of benevolence. I rejoice to hear, by certain channels, that you, my friend, are reconciled with all your relations. 'Tis the most kindly and natural species of love, and we have all the associated train of early feelings to secure its strength and perpetuity. Send me an account of your health: *indeed* I am solicitous about you. God love you and yours.

C. LAMB.

XIV. TO THE SAME

December 2, 1796.

I have delayed writing thus long, not having by me my copy of your poems, which I had lent. I am not satisfied with all your intended omissions. Why omit 40, 63, 84? Above all, let me protest strongly against your rejecting the "Complaint of Ninathoma," 86. The words, I acknowledge, are Ossian's, but you have added to them the "music of Caril." If a

vicarious substitute be wanting, sacrifice (and 'twill be a piece of self-denial too), the "Epitaph on an Infant," of which its author seems so proud, so tenacious. Or, if your heart be set on *perpetuating* the four-line wonder, I'll tell you what do; sell the copyright of it at once to a country statuary. Commence in this manner Death's prime poet-laureate; and let your verses be adopted in every village round, instead of those hitherto famous ones :—

> "Afflictions sore long time I bore;
> Physicians were in vain."

I have seen your last very beautiful poem in the *Monthly Magazine*: write thus, and you most generally have written thus, and I shall never quarrel with you about simplicity. With regard to my lines—

> "Laugh all that weep," &c.,

I would willingly sacrifice them; but my portion of the volume is so ridiculously little, that, in honest truth, I can't spare 'em. As things are, I have very slight pretensions to participate in the title-page. White's book is at length reviewed in the *Monthly*; was it your doing, or Dyer's, to whom I sent him?—or, rather, do you not write in the *Critical*?—for I observed, in an article of this month's, a line quoted out of that Sonnet on Mrs Siddons,

> "With eager wondering, and perturb'd delight."

And a line from *that* Sonnet would not readily have occurred to a stranger. That sonnet, Coleridge, brings afresh to my mind the time when you wrote those on Bowles, Priestley, Burke; — 'twas two Christmases ago, and in that nice little smoky room at the *Salutation*, which is even now continually presenting itself to my recollection, with all its associated train of pipes, tobacco, egg-hot, welsh-rabbit, metaphysics, and poetry.—Are we *never* to meet again?

How differently I am circumstanced now! I have never met with any one—never shall meet with any one—who could or can compensate me for the loss of your society. I have no one to talk all these matters about to; I lack friends. I lack books to supply their absence: but these complaints ill become me. Let me compare my present situation, prospects, and state of mind, with what they were but two months back—but two months! O my friend, I am in danger of forgetting the awful lessons then presented to me! Remind me of them; remind me of my duty! Talk seriously with me when you do write! I thank you, from my heart I thank you, for your solicitude about my sister. She is quite well, but must not, I fear, come to live with us yet a good while. In the first place, because, at present, it would hurt her, and hurt my father, for them to be together: secondly, from a regard to the world's good report; for, I fear, tongues will be busy whenever that event takes place. Some have hinted, one man has pressed it on me, that she should be in perpetual confinement: what she hath done to deserve, or the necessity of such an hardship, I see not; do you? I am starving at the India House, —near seven o'clock without my dinner; and so it has been, and will be, almost all the week. I get home at night o'erwearied, quite faint, and then to cards with my father, who will not let me enjoy a meal in peace; but I must conform to my situation; and I hope I am, for the most part, not unthankful.

I am got home at last, and, after repeated games at cribbage, have got my father's leave to write awhile; with difficulty got it, for when I expostulated about playing any more, he very aptly replied, "If you won't play with me, you might as well not come home at all." The argument was unanswerable, and I set to afresh. I told you I do not approve of your omissions; neither do I quite coincide with you in your arrangements. I have not time to point out a better,

and I suppose some self-associations of your own have determined their place as they now stand. Your beginning, indeed, with the *Joan of Arc* lines I coincide entirely with. I love a spendid outset—a magnificent portico; and the diapason is grand. When I read the *Religious Musings*, I think how poor, how unelevated, unoriginal, my blank verse is—"Laugh all that weep," especially, where the subject demanded a grandeur of conception; and I ask what business they have among yours? but friendship covereth a multitude of defects. I want some loppings made in the "Chatterton": it wants but a little to make it rank among the finest irregular lyrics I ever read. Have you time and inclination to go to work upon it? —or is it too late?—or do you think it needs none? Don't reject those verses in your *Watchman*, "Dear native brook," &c.; nor I think those last lines you sent me, in which "all effortless" is without doubt to be preferred to "inactive." If I am writing more than ordinarily dully, 'tis that I am stupified with a tooth-ache. Hang it! do not omit 48, 52, and 53: what you do retain, though, call Sonnets, for heaven's sake, and not Effusions. Spite of your ingenious anticipation of ridicule in your Preface, the last five lines of 50 are too good to be lost; the rest are not much worth. My tooth becomes importunate: I must finish. Pray, pray, write to me: if you knew with what an anxiety of joy I open such a long packet as you last sent me, you would not grudge giving a few minutes now and then to this intercourse (the only intercourse I fear we two shall ever have) —this conversation with your friend: such I boast to be called. God love you and yours! Write to me when you move, lest I should direct wrong. Has Sara no poems to publish? Those lines, 129, are probably too light for the volume where the *Religious Musings* are; but I remember some very beautiful lines, addressed by somebody at Bristol to somebody

in London. God bless you once more.—*Thursday Night.* C. LAMB.

XV. TO THE SAME

[Fragment.] Dec. 5, 1796.

At length I have done with verse-making; not that I relish other people's poetry less; their's comes from 'em without effort; mine is the difficult operation of a brain scanty of ideas, made more difficult by disuse. I have been reading "The Task" with fresh delight. I am glad you love Cowper. I could forgive a man for not enjoying Milton; but I would not call that man my friend who should be offended with the "divine chit-chat of Cowper." Write to me, God love you and yours! C. L.

XVI. TO THE SAME

Dec. 9th, 1796.

I am sorry I cannot now relish your poetical present so thoroughly as I feel it deserves; but I do not the less thank Lloyd and you for it. In truth, Coleridge, I am perplexed, and at times almost cast down. I am beset with perplexities. The old hag of a wealthy relation, who took my aunt off our hands in the beginning of trouble, has found out that she is "indolent and mulish"—I quote her own words, and that her attachment to us is so strong, that she can never be happy apart. The Lady, with delicate Irony, remarks that, if I am not an Hypocrite, I shall rejoyce to receive her again, and that it will be a means of making me more fond of home to have so dear a friend to come home to! The fact is she is jealous of my aunt's bestowing any kind recollections on us while she enjoys the patronage of her roof. She says she finds it inconsistent with her own "ease and tranquillity," to keep her any longer, and in fine summons me to fetch her home. Now, much as I should rejoyce to transplant the poor old

creature from the chilling air of such patronage, yet I know how straitened we are already, how unable already to answer any demand, which sickness or any extraordinary expence may make. I know this, and all unused as I am to struggle with perplexities, I am somewhat nonplussed, to say no worse. This prevents me from a thorough relish of what Lloyd's kindness and yours have furnished me with. I thank you though from my heart, and feel myself not quite alone in the earth.

Before I offer, what alone I have to offer, a few obvious remarks on the poems you sent me, I can but notice the odd coincidence of two young men, in one age, carolling their grandmothers. Love,—what L[loyd] calls the "feverish and romantic tye," hath too long domineered over all the charities of home: the dear domestic tyes of father, brother, husband. The amiable and benevolent Cowper has a beautiful passage in his *Task*,—some natural and painful reflections on his deceased parents: and Hayley's sweet lines to his mother are notoriously the best things he ever wrote. Cowper's lines some of them are—

> "How gladly would the man recall to life
> The boy's neglected sire; a mother, too,
> That softer name, perhaps more gladly still,
> Might he demand them at the gates of death."

I cannot but wish to see my granny so gayly decked forth: though, I think, whoever altered "thy" praises to "her" praises—"thy" honoured memory to "her" honoured memory, did wrong—they best expressed my feelings. There is a pensive state of recollection in which the mind is disposed to apostrophise the departed objects of its attachment; and breaking loose from grammatical precision, changes from the first to the third, and from the third to the first person, just as the random fancy or the feeling directs. Among Lloyd's sonnets, the 6th,

7th, 8th, 9th, and 11th are eminently beautiful. I think him too lavish of his expletives; the *dos* and *dids*, when they occur too often, bring a quaintness with them along with their simplicity, or rather air of antiquity, which the patrons of them seem desirous of conveying.

The lines on Friday are very pleasing "yet calls itself in pride of Infancy woman or man," &c. "Affections tottering troop" are prominent beauties. Another time when my mind were more at ease, I could be more particular in my remarks, and I would postpone them now, only I want some diversion of mind. The *Melancholy Man* is a charming piece of poetry, only the "whys" with submission are too many. Yet the questions are too good to be any of 'em omitted. For those lines of yours, page 18, omitted in magazine, I think the three first better retained—the three last, which are somewhat simple in the most 'affronting' sense of the word, better omitted—to this my taste directs me—I have no claim to prescribe to you. "Their slothful loves and dainty sympathies" is an exquisite line, but you knew *that* when you wrote 'em and I trifle in pointing such out. 'Tis altogether the sweetest thing to me you ever wrote—tis all honey "No wish profaned my overwhelmed heart, Blest hour, it was a Luxury to be." I recognise feelings, which I may taste again, if tranquillity has not taken his flight for ever, and I will not believe but I shall be happy, very happy again. The next poem to your friend is very beautiful—need I instance the pretty fancy of "the rock's collected tears"—or that original line "pour'd all its healthful greenness on the soul"—let it be since you ask me "as neighbouring fountains each reflect the whole" though that is somewhat harsh—indeed the ending is not so finished as the rest, which if you omit in your forthcoming edition, you will do the volume wrong, and the very binding will cry out. Neither shall

you omit the two following poems. "The hour when we shall meet again," is fine fancy tis true, but fancy catering in the Service of the feeling—fetching from her stores most splendid banquets to satisfy her—Do not, do not omit it. Your sonnet to the *River Otter* excludes those equally beautiful lines, which deserve not to be lost, "as the tried savage," &c., and I prefer that copy in your *Watchman*. I plead for its preference.

Another time I may notice more particularly Lloyd's, Southey's, Dermody's Sonnets. I shrink from them now: my teazing lot makes me too confused for a clear judgment of things, too selfish for sympathy; and these ill-digested, meaningless remarks I have imposed on myself as a task, to lull reflection, as well as to show you I did not neglect reading your valuable present. Return my acknowledgments to Lloyd; you two seem to be about realising an Elysium upon earth, and, no doubt, I shall be happier. Take my best wishes. Remember me most affectionately to Mrs C., and give little David Hartley—God bless its little heart!—a kiss for me. Bring him up to know the meaning of his Christian name, and what that name (imposed upon him) will demand of him.

God love you! C. LAMB.

I write, for one thing, to say that I shall write no more, till you send me word where you are, for you are so soon to move. My sister is pretty well, thank God. We think of you very often. God bless you, continue to be my correspondent, and I will strive to fancy that this world is *not* "all barrenness."

XVII. TO THE SAME

Dec. 10, 1796.

I had put my letter into the post rather hastily, not expecting to have to acknowledge another from you so soon. This morning's present has made me

alive again. My last night's epistle was childishly querulous; but you have put a little life into me, and I will thank you for your remembrance of me, while my sense of it is yet warm; for if I linger a day or two I may use the same phrase of acknowledgment, or similar, but the feeling that dictates it now will be gone. I shall send you a *caput mortuum*, not a *cor vivens*. Thy *Watchman's*, thy bellman's verses, I do retort upon thee, thou libellous varlet! Why you cried the hours yourself, and who made you so proud! But I submit, to show my humility most implicitly to your dogmas. I reject entirely the copy of verses you reject. With regard to my leaving off versifying, you have said so many pretty things, so many fine compliments, ingeniously decked out in the garb of sincerity, and undoubtedly springing from a present feeling somewhat like sincerity, that you might melt the most un-muse-ical soul—did you not (now for a Rowland compliment for your profusion of Olivers!) did you not in your very epistle, by the many pretty fancies and profusion of heart displayed in it, dissuade and discourage me from attempting any thing after you. At present I have not leisure to make verses, nor any thing approaching to a fondness for the exercise. In the ignorant present time, who can answer for the future man? "At lovers' perjuries Jove laughs"; and poets have sometimes a disingenuous way of forswearing their occupation. This though is not my case. The tender cast of soul, sombred with melancholy and subsiding recollections, is favourable to the Sonnet or the Elegy; but from

> "The sainted growing woof
> The teasing troubles keep aloof."

The music of poesy may charm for a while the importunate teasing cares of life; but the teased and troubled man is not in a disposition to make that music.

You sent me some very sweet lines relative to Burns,

but it was at a time when in my highly agitated and perhaps somewhat distorted state of mind I thought it a duty to read 'em hastily and burn 'em. I burned all my own verses; all my book of extracts from Beaumont and Fletcher and a thousand sources; I burned a little journal of my foolish passion which I had a long time kept—

> "Noting ere they past away
> The little lines of yesterday."

I almost burned all your letters,—I did as bad, I lent 'em to a friend to keep out of my brother's sight, should he come and make inquisition into our papers; for, much as he dwelt upon your conversation while you were among us, and delighted to be with you, it has been his fashion ever since to depreciate and cry you down: you were the cause of my madness—you and your "damned foolish sensibility and melancholy"; and he lamented, with a true brotherly feeling, that we ever met; even as the sober citizen, when his son went astray upon the mountains of Parnassus, is said to have "cursed Wit and Poetry and Pope." I quote wrong, but no matter. These letters I lent to a friend to be out of the way for a season; but I have claimed 'em in vain, and shall not cease to regret their loss. Your packets, posterior to the date of my misfortunes, commencing with that valuable consolatory epistle, are every day accumulating: they are sacred things with me.

Publish your Burns when and how you like, it will be new to me: my memory of it is very confused, and tainted with unpleasant associations. Burns was the god of my idolatry, as Bowles is of yours. I am jealous of your fraternising with Bowles, when I think you relish him more than Burns, or my old favourite, Cowper. But you conciliate matters when you talk of the "divine chit-chat" of the latter: by that expression I see you thoroughly relish him. I love

Mrs Coleridge for her excuses an hundredfold more dearly than if she heaped "line upon line," out-Hannah-ing Hannah More; and would rather hear you sing "Did a very little baby," by your family fire-side, than listen to you when you were repeating one of Bowles's sweetest sonnets, in your sweet manner, while we two were indulging sympathy, a solitary luxury, by the fire-side at the *Salutation*. Yet have I no higher ideas of heaven. Your company was one "cordial in this melancholy vale": the remembrance of it is a blessing partly, and partly a curse. When I can abstract myself from things present, I can enjoy it with a freshness of relish; but it more constantly operates to an unfavourable comparison with the uninteresting converse I always and *only* can partake in. Not a soul loves Bowles here; scarce one has heard of Burns; few but laugh at me for reading my Testament. They talk a language I understand not. I conceal sentiments that would be a puzzle to them. I can only converse with you by letter, and with the dead in their books. My sister, indeed, is all I can wish in a companion; but our spirits are alike poorly, our reading and knowledge from the self-same sources; our communication with the scenes of the world alike narrow. Never having kept separate company, or any "company" "*together*"—never having read separate books, and few books *together*—what knowledge have we to convey to each other? In our little range of duties and connexions, how few sentiments can take place, without friends, with few books, with a taste for religion, rather than a strong religious habit! We need some support, some leading-strings to cheer and direct us. You talk very wisely; and be not sparing of *your advice*. Continue to remember us, and to show us you do remember us: we will take as lively an interest in what concerns you and yours. All I can add to your happiness will be sympathy: you can add to mine *more*; you can teach me wisdom. I am in-

deed an unreasonable correspondent; but I was unwilling to let my last night's letter go off without this qualifier: you will perceive by this my mind is easier, and you will rejoice. I do not expect or wish you to write till you are moved; and, of course, shall not, till you announce to me that event, think of writing myself. Love to Mrs Coleridge and David Hartley, and my kind remembrance to Lloyd, if he is with you.

C. LAMB.

I will get *Nature and Art*: have not seen it yet, nor any of Jeremy Taylor's works.

XVIII. TO THE SAME

Jan. 2, 1797.

If the fraternal sentiment conveyed in the following lines will atone for the total want of anything like

merit or genius in it, I desire you will print it next after my other Sonnet to my Sister.

Friend of my earliest years and childish days,
My joys, my sorrows, thou with me hast shar'd,
Companion dear, and we alike have far'd
(Poor pilgrims we) thro' life's unequal ways.
It were unwisely done, should we refuse
To cheer our path as featly as we may,
Our lonely path to cheer, as trav'llers use,
With merry song, quaint tale, or roundelay;
And we will sometimes talk past troubles o'er,
Of mercies shewn, and all our sickness heal'd,
And in his judgments God rememb'ring love;
And we will learn to praise God evermore,
For those glad tidings of great joy reveal'd
By that sooth Messenger sent from above.

This has been a sad long letter of business, with no room in it for what honest Bunyan terms heart-work. I have just room left to congratulate you on your removal to Stowey; to wish success to all your projects; to "bid fair peace" be to that house; to send my love and best wishes, breathed warmly, after your dear Sara, and her little David Hartley. If Lloyd be with you, bid him write to me: I feel to whom I am obliged primarily for two very friendly letters I have received already from him. A dainty sweet book that *Nature and Art* is. I am at present re-re-reading Priestley's Examination of the Scotch Doctors: how the rogue strings 'em up! three together! You have no doubt read that clear, strong, humorous, most entertaining piece of reasoning. If not, procure it, and be exquisitely amused. I wish I could get more of Priestley's works. Can you recommend me to any more books, easy of access, such as circulating shops afford? God bless you and yours.

Monday Morning, at Office.

Poor Mary is very unwell with a sore throat and a slight species of scarlet fever. God bless her too.

XIX. TO THE SAME

Jan. 10, 1797.

I need not repeat my wishes to have my little sonnets printed *verbatim* my last way. In particular, I fear lest you should prefer printing my first sonnet, as you have done more than once, "Did the wand of Merlin wave?" It looks so like *Mr* Merlin, the ingenious successor of the immortal Merlin, now living in good health and spirits, and flourishing in magical reputation, in Oxford Street; and, on my life, one half who read it would understand it so. Do put 'em forth, finally, as I have in various letters settled it; for first a man's self is to be pleased, and then his friends; and, of course, the greater number of his friends, if they differ *inter se*. Thus taste may safely be put to the vote. I do long to see our names together; not for vanity's sake, and naughty pride of heart altogether, for not a living soul I know, or am intimate with, will scarce read the book: so I shall gain nothing, *quoad famam*; and yet there is a little vanity mixes in it, I cannot help denying. I am aware of the unpoetical cast of the six last lines of my last sonnet, and think myself unwarranted in smuggling so tame a thing into the book; only the sentiments of those six lines are thoroughly congenial to me in my state of mind, and I wish to accumulate perpetuating tokens of my affection to poor Mary. That it has no originality in its cast, nor any thing in the feelings but what is common and natural to thousands, nor ought properly to be called poetry, I see; still it will tend to keep present to my mind a view of things which I ought to indulge. These six lines, too, have not, to a reader, a connectedness with the foregoing. Omit it, if you like.—What a treasure it is to my poor, indolent, and unemployed mind, thus to lay hold on a subject to talk about, though 'tis but a sonnet, and that of the lowest order! How mournfully inactive I am!—'Tis night: Good night.

My sister, I thank God, is nigh recovered: she was seriously ill. Do, in your next letter, and that right soon, give me some satisfaction respecting your present situation at Stowey. Is it a farm you have got? And what does your worship know about farming?

Coleridge, I want you to write an epic poem. Nothing short of it can satisfy the vast capacity of true poetic genius. Having one great end to direct all your poetical faculties to, and on which to lay out your hopes, your ambition will show you to what you are equal. By the sacred energies of Milton! by the dainty, sweet, and soothing phantasies of honey-tongued Spenser! I adjure you to attempt the epic, or do something more ample than writing an occasional brief ode or sonnet; something, "to make yourself for ever known,—to make the age to come your own." But I prate; doubtless you meditate something. When you are exalted among the lords of epic fame, I shall recall with pleasure, and exultingly, the days of your humility, when you disdained not to put forth, in the same volume with mine, your *Religious Musings* and that other poem from the *Joan of Arc*, those promising first-fruits of high renown to come. You have learning, you have fancy, you have enthusiasm, you have strength, and amplitude of wings enow for flights like those I recommend. In the vast and unexplored regions of fairy-land there is ground enough unfound and uncultivated: search there, and realise your favourite Susquehannah scheme. In all our comparisons of taste, I do not know whether I have ever heard your opinion of a poet, very dear to me,—the now-out-of-fashion Cowley. Favour me with your judgment of him, and tell me if his prose essays, in particular, as well as no inconsiderable part of his verse, be not delicious. I prefer the graceful rambling of his essays, even to the courtly elegance and ease of Addison; abstracting from this the latter's exquisite humour.

When the little volume is printed, send me three or four, at all events not more than six copies, and tell me if I put you to any additional expense, by printing with you. I have no thought of the kind, and in that case must reimburse you.

Priestley, whom I sin in almost adoring, speaks of "such a choice of company as tends to keep up that right bent and firmness of mind which a necessary intercourse with the world would otherwise warp and relax." "Such fellowship is the true balsam of life; its cement is infinitely more durable than that of the friendships of the world; and it looks for its proper fruit and complete gratification to the life beyond the grave." Is there a possible chance for such an one as I to realise in this world such friendships? Where am I to look for 'em? What testimonials shall I bring of my being worthy of such friendship? Alas! the great and good go together in separate herds, and leave such as I to lag far, far behind in all intellectual, and, far more grievous to say, in all moral accomplishments. Coleridge, I have not one truly elevated character among my acquaintance: not one Christian: not one but undervalues Christianity. Singly, what am I to do? Wesley, (have you read his life?) was *he* not an elevated character? Wesley has said, "Religion is not a solitary thing." Alas! it necessarily is so with me, or next to solitary. 'Tis true you write to me; but correspondence by letter, and personal intimacy, are very widely different. Do, do write to me, and do some good to my mind, already how much "warped and relaxed" by the world! 'Tis the conclusion of another evening. Good night. God have us all in his keeping!

If you are sufficiently at leisure, oblige me with an account of your plan of life at Stowey—your literary occupations and prospects; in short, make me acquainted with every circumstance which, as relating to you, can be interesting to me. Are you yet a

Berkleyan? Make me one. I rejoice in being, speculatively, a Necessarian. Would to God, I were habitually a practical one! Confirm me in the faith of that great and glorious doctrine, and keep me steady in the contemplation of it. You some time since expressed an intention you had of finishing some extensive work on the Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion. Have you let that intention go? Or are you doing any thing towards it? Make to yourself other ten talents. My letter is full of nothingness. I talk of nothing. But I must talk. I love to write to you. I take a pride in it. It makes me think less meanly of myself. It makes me think myself not totally disconnected from the better part of mankind. I know I am too dissatisfied with the beings around me; but I cannot help occasionally exclaiming, "Woe is me, that I am constrained to dwell with Meshech, and to have my habitation among the tents of Kedar!" I know I am noways better in practice than my neighbours, but I have a taste for religion, an occasional earnest aspiration after perfection, which they have not. I gain nothing by being with such as myself: we encourage one another in mediocrity. I am always longing to be with men more excellent than myself. All this must sound odd to you; but these are my predominant feelings when I sit down to write to you, and I should put force upon my mind were I to reject them. Yet I rejoice, and feel my privilege with gratitude, when I have been reading some wise book, such as I have just been reading, *Priestley on Philosophical Necessity*, in the thought that I enjoy a kind of communion, a kind of friendship even, with the great and good. Books are to me instead of friends. I wish they did not resemble the latter in their scarceness.

And how does little David Hartley? "*Ecquid in antiquam virtutem?*" Does his mighty name work wonders yet upon his little frame and opening mind?

I did not distinctly understand you : you don't mean to make an actual ploughman of him ! Is Lloyd with you yet ? Are you intimate with Southey ? What poems is he about to publish ? He hath a most prolific brain, and is indeed a most sweet poet. But how can you answer all the various mass of interrogation I have put to you in the course of this sheet ? Write back just what you like, only write something, however brief. I have now nigh finished my page, and got to the end of another evening (Monday evening), and my eyes are heavy and sleepy, and my brain unsuggestive. I have just heart enough awake to say good night once more, and God love you, my dear friend ; God love us all ! Mary bears an affectionate remembrance of you. CHARLES LAMB.

XX. TO THE SAME

January 16, 1797.

Dear C———,—You have learned by this time, with surprise, no doubt, that Lloyd is with me in town. The emotions I felt on his coming so unlooked for, are not ill expressed in what follows, and what (if you do not object to them as too personal, and to the world obscure, or otherwise wanting in worth,) I should wish to make a part of our little volume. I shall be sorry if that volume comes out, as it necessarily must do, unless you print those very schoolboyish verses I sent you on not getting leave to come down to Bristol last Summer. I say I shall be sorry that I have addressed you in nothing which can appear in our joint volume ; so frequently, so habitually, as you dwell in my thoughts, 'tis some wonder those thoughts came never yet in contact with a poetical mood. But you dwell in my heart of hearts, and I love you in all the naked honesty of prose. God bless you, and all your little domestic circle ! My tenderest remembrances to your beloved Sara, and a smile and

a kiss from me to your dear dear little David Hartley. The verses I refer to above, slightly amended, I have sent (forgetting to ask your leave, tho' indeed I gave them only your initials,) to the *Monthly Magazine*, where they may possibly appear next month, and where I hope to recognise your poem on Burns.

TO AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR

Alone, obscure, without a friend,
  A cheerless, solitary thing,
Why seeks my Lloyd the stranger out?
  What off'ring can the stranger bring?

Of social scenes, home-bred delights,
  That him in aught compensate may
For Stowey's pleasant winter nights,
  For loves and friendships far away?

In brief oblivion to forego
  Friends, such as thine, so justly dear,
And be awhile with me content
  To stay, a kindly loiterer, here.

For this a gleam of random joy
  Hath flush'd my unaccustomed cheek,
And, with an o'ercharg'd bursting heart,
  I feel the thanks, I cannot speak.

O! sweet are all the Muses' lays,
  And sweet the charm of matin bird—
'Twas long, since these estranged ears
  The sweeter voice of Friend had heard.

The voice hath spoke: the pleasant sounds
  In memory's ear in after-time
Shall live, to sometimes rouse a tear,
  And sometimes prompt an honest rhyme.

For when the transient charm is fled,
  And when the little week is o'er,
To cheerless, friendless solitude
  When I return, as heretofore—

Long, long, within my aching heart
  The grateful sense shall cherish'd be;
I'll think less meanly of myself,
  That Lloyd will sometimes think on me.

O Coleridge, would to God you were in London with us, or we two at Stowey with you all! Lloyd takes up his abode at the *Bull and Mouth*; the *Cat and Salutation* would have had a charm more forcible for me. *O noctes cœnæque Deum*! Anglice—Welsh rabbit, punch, and poesy. Should you be induced to publish those very schoolboy-ish verses, print 'em as they will occur, if at all, in the *Monthly Magazine*; yet I should feel ashamed that to you I wrote nothing better: but they are too personal, and almost trifling and obscure withal. Some lines of mine to Cowper were in the last *Monthly Magazine*; they have not body of thought enough to plead for the retaining of 'em. My sister's kind love to you all.

C. LAMB.

XXI. TO THE SAME

February 5, 1797.

Sunday Morning.—You cannot surely mean to degrade the Joan of Arc into a pot-girl. You are not going, I hope, to annex to that most splendid ornament of Southey's poem all this cock-and-a-bull story of Joan, the publican's daughter of Neufchatel, with the lamentable episode of a waggoner, his wife, and six children. The texture will be most lamentably disproportionate. The first forty or fifty lines of these addenda are, no doubt, in their way, admirable too; but many would prefer the Joan of Southey.

> "On mightiest deeds to brood
> Of shadowy vastness, such as made my heart
> Throb fast; anon I paused, and in a state
> Of half expectance listen'd to the wind";
>
> "They wonder'd at me, who had known me once
> A cheerless careless damsel";
>
> "The eye,
> That of the circling throng and of the visible world
> Unseeing, saw the shapes of holy phantasy";

I see nothing in your description of the Maid equal to these. There is a fine originality certainly in those lines—

> "For she had lived in this bad world
> As in a place of tombs,
> And touch'd not the pollutions of the dead";

but your "fierce vivacity" is a faint copy of the "fierce and terrible benevolence" of Southey; added to this, that it will look like rivalship in you, and extort a comparison with Southey,—I think to your disadvantage. And the lines, considered in themselves as an addition to what you had before written, (strains of a far higher mood,) are but such as Madame Fancy loves in some of her more familiar moods, at such times as she has met Noll Goldsmith, and walked and talked with him, calling him "old acquaintance." Southey certainly has no pretensions to vie with you in the sublime of poetry; but he tells a plain tale better than you. I will enumerate some woful blemishes, some of 'em sad deviations from that simplicity which was your aim. "Hail'd who might be near" (the "canvas-coverture moving," by the by, is laughable); "a woman and six children" (by the way,—why not nine children? It would have been just half as pathetic again): "statues of sleep they seem'd": "frost mangled wretch": "green putridity": "hail'd him immortal" (rather ludicrous again): "voiced a sad and simple tale" (abominable!): "unprovender'd": "such his tale": "Ah! suffering to the height of what was suffer'd" (a most *insufferable line*): "amazements of affright": "the hot sore brain attributes its own hues of ghastliness and torture" (what shocking confusion of ideas)!

In these delineations of common and natural feelings, in the familiar walks of poetry, you seem to resemble Montauban dancing with Roubigne's tenants "*much of his native loftiness remained in the execution.*"

I was reading your *Religious Musings* the other day, and sincerely I think it the noblest poem in the language, next after the *Paradise Lost*; and even that was not made the vehicle of such grand truths. "There is one mind," &c., down to "Almighty's throne," are without a rival in the whole compass of my poetical reading.

> "Stands in the sun, and with no partial gaze
> Views all creation."

I wish I could have written those lines. I rejoice that I am able to relish them. The loftier walks of Pindus are your proper region. There you have no compeer in modern times. Leave the lowlands, unenvied, in possession of such men as Cowper and Southey. Thus am I pouring balsam into the wounds I may have been inflicting on my poor friend's vanity.

In your notice of Southey's new volume you omit to mention the most pleasing of all, the "Miniature"—

> "There were
> Who form'd high hopes and flattering ones of thee
> Young Robert,
> Spirit of Spenser!—was the wanderer wrong?"

Fairfax I have been in quest of a long time. Johnson, in his "Life of Waller," gives a most delicious specimen of him, and adds, in the true manner of that delicate critic, as well as amiable man, "It may be presumed that this old version will not be much read after the elegant translation of my friend, Mr Hoole." I endeavoured—I wished to gain some idea of Tasso from this Mr Hoole, the great boast and ornament of the India House, but soon desisted. I found him more vapid than smallest small beer "sun-vinegared." Your "Dream," down to that exquisite line—

> "I can't tell half his adventures,"

is a most happy resemblance of Chaucer. The remainder is so so. The best line, I think, is, "He belong'd, I believe, to the witch Melancholy." By the way, when will our volume come out? Don't delay it till you have written a new Joan of Arc. Send what letters you please by me, and in any way you choose, single or double. The India Company is better adapted to answer the cost than the generality of my friend's correspondents,—such poor and honest dogs as John Thelwall, particularly. I cannot say I know Colston, at least intimately. I once supped with him and Allen: I think his manners very pleasing. I will not tell you what I think of Lloyd, for he may by chance come to see this letter, and that thought puts a restraint on me. I cannot think what subject would suit your epic genius; some philosophical subject, I conjecture, in which shall be blended the sublime of poetry and of science. Your proposed "Hymns" will be a fit preparatory study wherewith "to discipline your young noviciate soul." I grow dull; I'll go walk myself out of my dullness.

Sunday Night.—You and Sara are very good to think so kindly and so favourably of poor Mary; I would to God all did so too. But I very much fear she must not think of coming home in my father's lifetime. It is very hard upon her; but our circumstances are peculiar, and we must submit to them. God be praised she is so well as she is. She bears her situation as one who has no right to complain. My poor old aunt, whom you have seen, the kindest, goodest creature to me when I was at school: who used to toddle there to bring me good things, when I, schoolboy like, only despised her for it, and used to be ashamed to see her come and sit herself down on the old coal-hole steps as you went into the old grammar-school, and open her apron, and bring out her bason, with some nice thing she had caused to be

saved for me; the good old creature is now lying on her death-bed. I cannot bear to think on her deplorable state. To the shock she received on that our evil day, from which she never completely recovered, I impute her illness. She says, poor thing, she is glad she is come home to die with me. I was always her favourite:

> "No after friendship e'er can raise
> The endearments of our early days,
> Nor e'er the heart such fondness prove,
> As when it first began to love."

Lloyd has kindly left me, for a keep-sake, *John Woolman*. You have read it, he says, and like it. Will you excuse one short extract? I think it could not have escaped you:—"Small treasure to a resigned mind is sufficient. How happy is it to be content with a little, to live in humility, and feel *that* in us, which breathes out this language—Abba! Father!" ——I am almost ashamed to patch up a letter in this miscellaneous sort; but I please myself in the thought, that any thing from me will be acceptable to you. I am rather impatient, childishly so, to see our names affixed to the same common volume. Send me two, when it does come out; two will be enough—or indeed one—but two better. I have a dim recollection that, when in town, you were talking of the Origin of Evil as a most prolific subject for a long poem. Why not adopt it, Coleridge?—there would be room for imagination. Or the description (from a Vision or Dream, suppose) of an Utopia in one of the planets (the Moon for instance). Or a Five Days' Dream, which shall illustrate, in sensible imagery, Hartley's five Motives to Conduct:—1. Sensation; 2. Imagination; 3. Ambition; 4. Sympathy; 5. Theopathy:—*First*. Banquets, music, &c., effeminacy,—and their insufficiency. *Second*. "Beds of hyacinth and roses, where young Adonis oft reposes"; "Fortunate Isles"; "The pagan Elysium," &c.; poetical pictures;

antiquity as pleasing to the fancy;—their emptiness; madness, &c. *Third.* Warriors, Poets; some famous yet more forgotten; their fame or oblivion now alike indifferent; pride, vanity, &c. *Fourth.* All manner of pitiable stories, in Spenser-like verse; love; friendship, relationship, &c. *Fifth.* Hermits; Christ and his apostles; martyrs; heaven, &c. An imagination like yours, from these scanty hints, may expand into a thousand great ideas, if indeed you at all comprehend my scheme, which I scarce do myself.

Monday Morn. — "A London letter — Ninepence halfpenny!" Look you, master poet, I have remorse as well as another man, and my bowels can sound upon occasion. But I must put you to this charge, for I cannot keep back my protest, however ineffectual, against the annexing your latter lines to those former — this putting of new wine into old bottles. This my duty done, I will cease from writing till you invent some more reasonable mode of conveyance. Well may the "ragged followers of the Nine" set up 'for flocci-nauci-what-do-you-call-'emists! and I do not wonder that in their splendid visions of Utopias in America they protest against the admission of those *yellow*-complexioned, *copper*-coloured, *white*-livered gentlemen, who never proved themselves their friends. Don't you think your verses on a "Young Ass" too trivial a companion for the "Religious Musings"?—"Scoundrel monarch," alter that; and the "Man of Ross" is scarce admissible, as it now stands, curtailed of its fairer half: reclaim its property from the "Chatterton," which it does but encumber, and it will be a rich little poem. I hope you expunge great part of the old notes in the new edition: that, in particular, most barefaced, unfounded, impudent assertion, that Mr Rogers is indebted for his story to *Loch Lomond*, a poem by Bruce! I have read the latter. I scarce think you have. Scarce any thing is common to them both. The poor author of

the *Pleasures of Memory* was sorely hurt, Dyer says, by the accusation of unoriginality. He never saw the poem. I long to read your poem on Burns; I retain so indistinct a memory of it. In what shape and how does it come into public? As you leave off writing poetry till you finish your Hymns, I suppose you print, now, all you have got by you. You have scarce enough unprinted to make a second volume with Lloyd. Tell me all about it. What is become of Cowper? Lloyd told me of some verses on his mother. If you have them by you, pray send 'em me. I do so love him! Never mind their merit. May be *I* may like 'em, as your taste and mine do not always exactly *identify*. Yours, C. LAMB.

XXII. TO THE SAME

February 13th, 1797.

Your poem is altogether admirable: parts of it are even exquisite; in particular your personal account of the Maid far surpasses any thing of the sort in Southey. I perceived all its excellences, on a first reading, as readily as now you have been removing a supposed film from my eyes. I was only struck with a certain faulty disproportion, in the matter and the *style*, which I still think I perceive, between these lines and the former ones. I had an end in view: I wished to make you reject the poem only as being discordant with the other; and, in subservience to that end, it was politically done in me to over-pass and make no mention of merit, which, could you think me capable of *overlooking*, might reasonably damn for ever in your judgment all pretensions, in me, to be critical. There—I will be judged by Lloyd, whether I have not made a very handsome recantation. I was in the case of a man whose friend has

asked him his opinion of a certain young lady. The deluded wight gives judgment against her *in toto*—doesn't like her face, her walk, her manners; finds fault with her eyebrows; can see no wit in her. His friends look blank; he begins to smell a rat; wind veers about; he acknowledges her good sense, her judgment in dress, a certain simplicity of manners and honesty of heart, something too in her manners which gains upon you after a short acquaintance; and then her accurate pronunciation of the French language, and a pretty uncultivated taste in drawing. The reconciled gentleman smiles applause, squeezes him by the hand, and hopes he will do him the honour of taking a bit of dinner with Mrs —— and him,—a plain family dinner,—some day next week; "for I suppose you never heard we were married. I'm glad to see you like my wife, however; you'll come and see her, ha?" Now am I too proud to retract entirely? Yet I do perceive I am in some sort straitened. You are manifestly wedded to this poem; and what fancy has joined let no man separate. I turn me to the *Joan of Arc*, second book.

The solemn openings of it are with sounds which, Lloyd would say, "are silence to the mind." The deep preluding strains are fitted to initiate the mind, with a pleasing awe, into the sublimest mysteries of theory concerning man's nature, and his noblest destination—the philosophy of a first cause—of subordinate agents in creation, superior to man—the subserviency of Pagan worship and Pagan faith to the introduction of a purer and more perfect religion, which you so elegantly describe as winning, with gradual steps, her difficult way northward from Bethabara. After all this cometh Joan, a *publican's* daughter, sitting on an ale-house *bench*, and marking the *swingings* of the *signboard*, finding a poor man, his wife, and six children, starved to death with cold, and thence roused into a state of mind proper

to receive visions, emblematical of equality; which, what the devil Joan had to do with, I don't know, or indeed with the French and American revolutions; though that needs no pardon, it is executed so nobly. After all, if you perceive no disproportion, all argument is vain: I do not so much object to parts. Again, when you talk of building your fame on these lines in preference to the *Religious Musings*, I cannot help conceiving of you, and of the author of that, as two different persons, and I think you a very vain man.

I have been re-reading your letter. Much of it I *could* dispute; but with the latter part of it, in which you compare the two Joans with respect to their predispositions for fanaticism, I, *toto corde*, coincide; only I think that Southey's strength rather lies in the description of the emotions of the Maid under the weight of inspiration. These (I see no mighty difference between *her* describing them or *your* describing them), these if you only equal, the previous admirers of his poem, as is natural, will prefer his. If you surpass, prejudice will scarcely allow it, and I scarce think you will surpass, though your specimen at the conclusion (I am in earnest) I think very nigh equals them. And in an account of a fanatic or of a prophet, the description of her *emotions* is expected to be most highly finished. By the way, I spoke far too disparagingly of your lines, and I am ashamed to say, purposely. I should like you to specify or particularize. The story of the "Tottering Eld," of "his eventful years all come and gone," is too general. Why not make him a soldier, or some character, however, in which he has been witness to frequency of "cruel wrong and strange distress"! I think I should. When I laughed at the "miserable man crawling from beneath the coverture," I wonder I did not perceive that it was a laugh of horror—such as I have laughed at Dante's picture of the famished

Ugolino. Without falsehood, I perceive an hundred beauties in your narrative. Yet I wonder you do not perceive something out-of-the-way, something unsimple and artificial, in the expression "voiced a sad tale." I hate made-dishes at the muses' banquet. I believe I was wrong in most of my other objections. But surely "hailed him immortal," adds nothing to the terror of the man's death, which it was your business to heighten, not diminish by a phrase which takes away all terror from it. I like that line, "They closed their eyes in sleep, nor knew 'twas death." Indeed there is scarce a line I do not like. "*Turbid* ecstacy," is surely not so good as what you *had* written, "troublous." "Turbid" rather suits the muddy kind of inspiration which London porter confers. The versification is, throughout, to my ears unexceptionable, with no disparagement to the measure of the *Religious Musings*, which is exactly fitted to the thoughts.

You were building your house on a rock when you rested your fame on that poem. I can scarce bring myself to believe that I am admitted to a familiar correspondence, and all the licence of friendship, with a man who writes blank verse like Milton. Now, this is delicate flattery, *indirect* flattery. Go on with your *Maid of Orleans*, and be content to be second to yourself. I shall become a convert to it when 'tis finished.

This afternoon I attend the funeral of my poor old aunt, who died on Thursday. I own I am thankful that the good creature has ended all her days of suffering and infirmity. She was to me the "cherisher of infancy," and one must fall on these occasions into reflections, which it would be commonplace to enumerate, concerning death, "of chance and change, and fate in human life." Good God, who could have foreseen all this but four months back! I had reckoned, in particular, on my aunt's

living many years; she was a very hearty old woman. But she was a mere skeleton before she died, looked more like a corpse that had lain weeks in the grave, than one fresh dead. "Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun; but if a man live many years and rejoice in them all yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many." Coleridge, why are we to live on after all the strength and beauty of existence is gone, when all the life of life is fled, as poor Burns expresses it? Tell Lloyd I have had thoughts of turning Quaker, and have been reading, or am rather just beginning to read, a most capital book, good thoughts in good language, William Penn's *No Cross, no Crown.* I like it immensely. Unluckily I went to one of his meetings, tell him, in St John Street, yesterday, and saw a man under all the agitations and workings of a fanatic, who believed himself under the influence of some "inevitable presence." This cured me of Quakerism. I love it in the books of Penn and Woolman; but I detest the vanity of a man thinking he speaks by the Spirit, when what he says an ordinary man might say without all that quaking and trembling. In the midst of his inspiration (and the effects of it were most noisy) was handed into the midst of the meeting a most terrible blackguard Wapping sailor. The poor man, I believe, would rather have been in the hottest part of an engagement, for the congregation of broad-brims, together with the ravings of the prophet, were too much for his gravity, though I saw even he had delicacy enough not to laugh out. And the inspired gentleman, though his manner was so supernatural, yet neither talked nor professed to talk any thing more than good sober sense, common morality, with now and then a declaration of not speaking from himself. Among other things, looking back to his childhood and early youth, he told the meeting what

a graceless young dog he had been; that in his youth he had a good share of wit. Reader, if thou hadst seen the gentleman, thou wouldst have sworn that it must indeed have been many years ago, for his rueful physiognomy would have scared away the playful goddess from the meeting, where he presided, for ever. A wit; a wit! what could he mean? It minded me of *Falkland* in the *Rivals*, "Am I full of wit and humour? No, indeed you are not. Am I the life and soul of every company I come into? No, it cannot be said you are." That hard-faced gentleman, a wit! Why, Nature wrote on his fanatic forehead fifty years ago, "Wit never comes, that comes to all." I should be as scandalised at a *bon mot* issuing from his oracle-looking mouth, as to see Cato go down a country dance. God love you all! You are very good to submit to be pleased with reading my nothings. 'Tis the privilege of friendship to talk nonsense, and to have her nonsense respected.—Yours ever,

C. Lamb.

XXIII. TO THE SAME

April 7th, 1797

Your last letter was dated the 10th of February; in it you promised to write again the next day. At least, I did not expect so long, so unfriend-like a silence. There was a time, Col——, when a remissness of this sort in a dear friend would have lain very heavy on my mind; but latterly I have been too familiar with neglect to feel much from the semblance of it. Yet, to suspect one's self overlooked, and in the way to oblivion, is a feeling rather humbling; perhaps, as tending to self-mortification, not unfavourable to the spiritual state. Still, as you meant to confer no benefit on the soul

of your friend, you do not stand quite clear from the imputation of unkindliness, (a word, by which I mean the diminutive of unkindness).

Lloyd tells me he has been very ill, and was on the point of leaving you. I addressed a letter to him at Birmingham: perhaps he got it not, and is still with you. I hope his ill-health has not prevented his attending to a request I made in it, that he would write again very soon to let me know how he was. I hope to God poor Lloyd is not very bad, or in a very bad way. Pray satisfy me about these things.

And then David Hartley was unwell; and how is the small philosopher, the minute philosopher? and David's mother? Coleridge, I am not trifling; nor are these matter-of-fact questions only. You are all very dear and precious to me. Do what you will, Coleridge, you may hurt me and vex me by your silence, but you cannot estrange my heart from you all. I cannot scatter friendships like chuck-farthings, nor let them drop from mine hand like hour-glass sand. I have but two or three people in the world to whom I am more than indifferent, and I can't afford to whistle them off to the winds.

By the way, Lloyd may have told you about my sister. I told him. If not, I have taken her out of her confinement, and taken a room for her at Hackney, and spend my Sundays, holidays, &c., with her. She boards herself. In a little half-year's illness, and in such an illness, of such a nature, and of such consequences, to get her out into the world again, with a prospect of her never being so ill again,—this is to be ranked not among the common blessings of Providence. May that merciful God make tender my heart, and make me as thankful, as in my distress I was earnest, in my prayers. Congratulate me on an ever-present and never-alienable friend like her. And

do, do insert, if you have not *lost*, my Dedication. It will have lost half its value by coming so late. If you really are going on with that volume, I shall be enabled in a day or two to send you a short poem to insert. Now, do answer this. Friendship, and acts of friendship, should be reciprocal, and free as the air. A friend should never be reduced to beg an alms of his fellow; yet I will beg an alms: I entreat you to write, and tell me all about poor Lloyd, and all of you. God love and preserve you all! C. LAMB.

XXIV. TO THE SAME

April 15th, 1797.

The above you will please to print immediately before the blank verse fragments. Tell me if you like it. I fear the latter half is unequal to the former, in parts of which I think you will discover a delicacy of pencilling not quite un-Spenser-like. The latter half aims at the *measure*, but has failed to attain the *poetry* of Milton in his *Comus*, and Fletcher in that exquisite thing ycleped the *Faithful Shepherdess*, where they both use eight-syllable lines. But this latter half was finished in great haste, and as a task, not from that impulse which affects the name of inspiration.

By the way, I have lit upon Fairfax's *Godfrey of Bullen*, for half-a-crown. Rejoice with me.

Poor dear Lloyd! I had a letter from him yesterday; his state of mind is truly alarming. He has, by his own confession, kept a letter of mine unopened three weeks; afraid, he says, to open it, lest I should speak upbraidingly to him; and yet this very letter of mine was in answer to one, wherein he informed me that an alarming illness had alone prevented him from writing. You will pray with me, I know, for his recovery; for surely, Coleridge, an exquisiteness of feeling like this must border on derangement. But

I love him more and more, and will not give up the hope of his speedy recovery, as he tells me he is under Dr Darwin's regimen.

God bless us all, and shield us from insanity, which is "the sorest malady of all."

My kind love to your wife and child.

C. Lamb.

Pray write now.

XXV. TO THE SAME

June 13th, 1797.

I stared with wild wonderment to see thy well-known hand again. It revived many a pleasing recollection of an epistolary intercourse, of late strangely suspended, once the pride of my life. Before I even opened thy letter I figured to myself a sort of complacency which my little hoard at home would feel at receiving the new-comer into the little drawer where I keep my treasures of this kind. You have done well in writing to me. The little room (was it not a little one) at the *Salutation* was already in the way of becoming a fading idea! It had begun to be classed in my memory with those "wanderings with a fair hair'd maid," in the recollection of which I feel I have no property. You press me, very kindly do you press me, to come to Stowey. Obstacles, strong as death, prevent me at present; maybe I may be able to come before the year is out. Believe me, I will come as soon as I can; but I dread naming a probable time. It depends on fifty things, besides the expense, which is not nothing. Lloyd wants me to come to see him; but, besides that you have a prior claim on me, I should not feel myself so much at home with him, till he gets a house of his own. As to Richardson, caprice may grant what caprice only refused; and it is no more hardship, rightly considered, to be dependent on him for pleasure, than to

lie at the mercy of the rain and sunshine for the enjoyment of a holiday; in either case we are not to look for a suspension of the laws of Nature. "Grill will be grill." Vide Spenser.

I could not but smile at the compromise you make with me for printing Lloyd's poems first; but there is in nature, I fear, too many tendencies to envy and jealousy not to justify you in your apology. Yet, if any one is welcome to pre-eminence from me, it is Lloyd, for he would be the last to desire it. So pray, let his name *uniformly* precede mine, for it would be treating me like a child to suppose it could give me pain. Yet, alas! I am not insusceptible of the bad passions. Thank God, I have the ingenuousness to be ashamed of them. I am dearly fond of Charles Lloyd; he is all goodness; and I have too much of the world in my composition to feel myself thoroughly deserving of his friendship.

Lloyd tells me that Sheridan put you upon writing your tragedy. I hope you are only Coleridgeizing when you talk of finishing it in a few days. Shakspeare was a more modest man; but you best know your own power.

Of my last poem you speak slightingly. Surely the longer stanzas were pretty tolerable: at least there was one good line in it,

> Thick-shaded trees, with dark green leaf rich clad."

To adopt your own expression, I call this a "rich" line, a fine full line. And some others I thought even beautiful. Believe me, my little gentleman will feel some repugnance at riding behind in the basket; though, I confess, in pretty good company. Your picture of idiocy, with the sugar-loaf head, is exquisite; but are you not too severe upon our more favoured brethren in fatuity? Lloyd tells me how ill your wife and child have been. I rejoice that they are better. My kindest remem-

brances, and those of my sister. I send you a trifling letter; but you have only to think that I have been skimming the superficies of my mind, and found it only froth. Now, do write again! You cannot believe how I long and love always to hear about you. Yours most affectionately,

CHARLES LAMB.

Monday Night.

XXVI. TO THE SAME

June 24th, 1797.

Did you seize the grand opportunity of seeing Kosciusko while he was at Bristol? I never saw a hero; I wonder how they look. I have been reading a most curious romance-like work, called the *Life of John Buncle, Esq.* 'Tis very interesting, and an extraordinary compound of all manner of subjects, from the depth of the ludicrous to the heights of sublime religious truth. There is much abstruse science in it above my cut, and an infinite fund of pleasantry. John Buncle is a famous fine man, formed in Nature's most eccentric hour. I am ashamed of what I write; but I have no topic to talk of. I see nobody. I sit and read, or walk alone, and hear nothing. I am quite lost to conversation from disuse; and out of the sphere of my little family (who I am thankful are dearer and dearer to me every day) I see no face that brightens up at my approach. My friends are at a distance. Worldly hopes are at a low ebb with me, and unworldly thoughts are familiarised to me, though I occasionally indulge in them. Still I feel a calm not unlike content. I fear it is sometimes more akin to physical stupidity than to a heaven-flowing serenity and peace. What right have I to obtrude all this upon you? and what is such a letter to you? and if I come to Stowey, what conversation can I furnish to compensate my friend for those stores of knowledge and of fancy; those delightful treasures of wisdom,

which, I know he will open to me? But it is better to give than to receive; and I was a very patient hearer, and docile scholar, in our winter evening meetings at Mr May's; was I not, Coleridge? What I have owed to thee, my heart can ne'er forget.

God love you and yours! C. L.

Saturday.

XXVII. TO THE SAME

[End of June] 1797.

I discern a possibility of my paying you a visit next week. May I, can I, shall I, come so soon? Have you *room* for me, *leisure* for me? and are you pretty well? Tell me all this honestly—immediately. And by what *day* coach could I come soonest and nearest to Stowey? A few months hence may suit you better; certainly me, as well. If so, say so. I long, I yearn, with all the longings of a child do I desire to see you, to come among you—to see the young philosopher, to thank Sara for her last year's invitation in person—to read your tragedy—to read over together our little book—to breathe fresh air—to revive in me vivid images of "*Salutation* scenery." There is a sort of sacrilege in my letting such ideas slip out of my mind and memory. Still that Richardson remaineth—a thorn in the side of Hope, when she would lean towards Stowey. Here I will leave off, for I dislike to fill up this paper (which involves a question so connected with my heart and soul) with meaner matter, or subjects to me less interesting. I can talk, as I can think, nothing else.

C. Lamb.

Thursday.

XXVIII. TO THE SAME

[July, 1797].

I am scarcely yet so reconciled to the loss of you, or so subsided into my wonted uniformity of feeling, as to sit calmly down to think of you and write to you. But I reason myself into the belief that those few and pleasant holidays shall not have been spent in vain. I feel improvement in the recollection of many a casual conversation. The names of Tom Poole, of Wordsworth and his good sister, with thine and Sara's, are become "familiar in my mouth as household words." You would make me very happy if you think W. has no objection, by transcribing for me that inscription of his. I have some scattered sentences ever floating on my memory, teasing me that I cannot remember more of it. You may believe I will make no improper use of it. Believe me I can think now of many subjects on which I had planned gaining information from you; but I forgot my "treasure's worth" while I possessed it. Your leg is now become to me a matter of much more importance; and many a little thing, which when I was present with you seemed scarce to *indent* my notice, now presses painfully on my remembrance. Is the Patriot come? Are Wordsworth and his sister gone yet? I was looking out for John Thelwall all the way from Bridgewater; and had I met him, I think it would have moved almost me to tears. You will oblige me, too, by sending me my great-coat, which I left behind in the oblivious state the mind is thrown into at parting. Is it not ridiculous that I sometimes envy that great-coat lingering so cunningly behind! At present I have none: so send it to me by a Stowey waggon, if there be such a thing, directing for C. L., No. 45, Chapel Street, Pentonville, near London. But above all, *that Inscription*! It will recall to me the tones of all your voices, and with them many a

remembered kindness to one who could and can repay you all only by the silence of a grateful heart. I could not talk much while I was with you; but my silence was not sullenness, nor I hope from any bad motive; but, in truth, disuse has made me awkward at it. I know I behaved myself, particularly at Tom Poole's, and at Cruikshank's, most like a sulky child; but company and converse are strange to me. It was kind in you all to endure me as you did.

Are you and your dear Sara—to me also very dear, because very kind—agreed yet about the management of little Hartley? And how go on the little rogue's teeth? I will see White to-morrow and he shall send you information on that matter; but as perhaps I can do it as well, after talking with him, I will keep this letter open.

My love and thanks to you and all of you.

C. L.

Wednesday Evening.

XXIX. TO THE SAME

Sept. 1797.

WRITTEN A TWELVEMONTH AFTER THE EVENTS

[*Friday next, Coleridge, is the day on which my Mother died*]

Alas! how I am chang'd! Where be the tears,
The sobs, and forc'd suspensions of the breath,
And all the dull desertions of the heart,
With which I hung o'er my dead mother's corse?
Where be the blest subsidings of the storm
Within, the sweet resignedness of hope
Drawn heavenward, and strength of filial love,
In which I bow'd me to my father's will?
My God, and my Redeemer! keep not thou
My soul in brute and sensual thanklessness
Seal'd up; oblivious ever of that dear grace,
And health restor'd to my long-loved friend,
Long-lov'd, and worthy known. Thou didst not leave
Her soul in death! O leave not now, my Lord,
Thy servants in far worse, in spiritual death!
And darkness blacker than those feared shadows
Of the valley all must tread. Lend us thy balms,
Thou dear Physician of the sin-sick soul,
And heal our cleansed bosoms of the wounds

With which the world has pierc'd us thro' and thro'.
Give us new flesh, new birth. Elect of heav'n
May we become; in thine election sure
Contain'd, and to one purpose stedfast drawn,
Our soul's salvation!
Thou, and I, dear friend,
With filial recognition sweet, shall know
One day the face of our dear mother in heaven,
And her remember'd looks of love shall greet
With looks of answering love; her placid smiles
Meet with a smile as placid, and her hand
With drops of fondness wet, nor fear repulse.
Be witness for me, Lord, I do not ask
Those days of vanity to return again,
(Nor fitting me to ask, nor thee to give).
Vain loves and wanderings with a fair-hair'd maid,
Child of the dust as I am, who so long
My captive heart steep'd in idolatry
And creature-loves. Forgive me, O my Maker!
If in a mood of grief I sin almost
In sometimes brooding on the days long past,
And from the grave of time wishing them back,
Days of a mother's fondness to her child,
Her little one.
O where be now those sports,
And infant play-games? where the joyous troops
Of children, and the haunts I did so love?
O my companions, O ye loved names
Of friend, or playmate dear; gone are ye now.
Gone divers ways; to honour and credit some;
And some, I fear, to ignominy and shame!
I only am left, with unavailing grief
To mourn one parent dead, and see one live
Of all life's joys bereft and desolate:
Am left with a few friends, and one, above
The rest, found faithful in a length of years,
Contented as I may, to bear me on
To the not unpeaceful evening of a day
Made black by morning storms!

The following I wrote when I had returned from Charles Lloyd, leaving him behind at Burton, with Southey. To understand some of it, you must remember that at that time he was very much perplexed in mind.

A stranger, and alone, I pass those scenes
We past so late together; and my heart
Felt something like desertion, as I look'd

Around me, and the pleasant voice of friend
Was absent, and the cordial look was there
No more to smile on me. I thought on Lloyd—
All he had been to me! And now I go
Again to mingle with a world impure?
With men who make a mock of holy things,
Mistaken, and on man's best hope think scorn.
The world does much to warp the heart of man;
And I may sometimes join its idiot laugh:
Of this I now complain not. Deal with me,
Omniscient Father, as Thou judgest best,
And in *Thy* season, soften Thou my heart.
I pray not for myself: I pray for him
Whose soul is sore perplexed. Shine Thou on him,
Father of lights! and in the difficult paths
Make plain his way before him: his own thoughts
May he not think—his own ends not pursue—
So shall he best perform Thy will on earth.
Greatest and Best, Thy will be ever ours!

The former of these poems I wrote with unusual celerity t'other morning at office. I expect you to like it better than any thing of mine; Lloyd does, and I do myself.

You use Lloyd very ill, never writing to him. I tell you again that his is not a mind with which you should play tricks. He deserves more tenderness from you.

For myself, I must spoil a little passage of Beaumont and Fletcher's to adapt it to my feelings:—

"I am prouder
That I was once your friend, tho' now forgot,
Than to have had another true to me."

If you don't write to me now, as I told Lloyd, I shall get angry, and call you hard names—Manchineel, and I don't know what else. I wish you would send me my great-coat. The snow and the rain season is at hand, and I have but a wretched old coat, once my father's, to keep 'em off, and that is transitory.

"When time drives flocks from field to fold,
When ways grow foul and blood gets cold,"

I shall remember where I left my coat. Meet emblem wilt thou be, old Winter, of a friend's neglect—cold, cold, cold! Remembrance where remembrance is due. C. Lamb.

XXX. TO THE SAME

January 28th, 1798.

You have writ me many kind letters, and I have answered none of them. I don't deserve your attentions. An unnatural indifference has been creeping on me since my last misfortunes, or I should have seized the first opening of a correspondence with *you*. To you I owe much, under God. In my brief acquaintance with you in London, your conversations won me to the better cause, and rescued me from the polluting spirit of the world. I might have been a worthless character without you; as it is, I do possess a certain improvable portion of devotional feelings, tho' when I view myself in the light of divine truth, and not according to the common measures of human judgment, I am altogether corrupt and sinful. This is no cant. I am very sincere.

These last afflictions, Coleridge, have failed to soften and bend my will. They found me unprepared. My former calamities produced in me a spirit of humility and a spirit of prayer. I thought they had sufficiently disciplined me; but the event ought to humble me. If God's judgment now fail to take away from me the heart of stone, what more grievous trials ought I not, to expect? I have been very querulous, impatient under the rod—full of little jealousies and heart burnings. I had wellnigh quarrelled with Charles Lloyd; and for no other reason, I believe, than that the good creature did all he could to make me happy. The truth is, I thought he tried to force my mind from its natural and proper bent.

He continually wished me to be from home; he was drawing me *from* the consideration of my poor dear Mary's situation, rather than assisting me to gain a proper view of it with religious consolations. I wanted to be left to the tendency of my own mind, in a solitary state, which, in times past, I knew had led to quietness and a patient bearing of the yoke. He was hurt that I was not more constantly with him; but he was living with White, a man to whom I had never been accustomed to impart my *dearest feelings*, tho' from long habits of friendliness, and many a social and good quality, I loved him very much. I met company there sometimes — indiscriminate company. Any society almost, when I am in affliction, is sorely painful to me. I seem to breathe more freely, to think more collectedly, to feel more properly and calmly, when alone. All these things the good creature did with the kindest intentions in the world, but they produced in me nothing but soreness and discontent. I became, as he complained, "jaundiced" towards him . . . but he has forgiven me; and his smile, I hope, will draw all such humours from me. I am recovering, God be praised for it, a healthiness of mind, something like calmness; but I want more religion. I am jealous of human helps and leaning-places. I rejoice in your good fortunes. May God at last settle you!—You have had many and painful trials; humanly speaking they are going to end; but we should rather pray that discipline should attend us thro' the whole of our lives. . . . A careless and a dissolute spirit has advanced upon *me* with large strides. Pray God that my present afflictions may be sanctified to me! Mary is recovering; but I see no opening yet of a situation for her. Your invitation went to my very heart; but you have a power of exciting interest, of leading all hearts captive, too forcible to admit of Mary's being with you. I consider her as perpetually

on the brink of madness. I think you would almost make her dance within an inch of the precipice: she must be with duller fancies, and cooler intellects. I know a young man of this description, who has suited her these twenty years, and may live to do so still, if we are one day restored to each other. In answer to your suggestion of occupation for me, I must say that I do not think my capacity altogether suited for disquisitions of that kind. . . . I have read little, I have a very weak memory, and retain little of what I read; am unused to compositions in which any methodising is required: but I thank you sincerely for the hint, and shall receive it as far as I am able; that is, endeavour to engage my mind in

some constant and innocent pursuit. I know my capacities better than you do.

Accept my kindest love, and believe me yours, as ever. C. L.

S. T. Coleridge,
at the Reverend A. Rowe's,
Shrewsbury.

XXXI. TO THE SAME

[June 1798.]

THESES QUÆDAM THEOLOGICÆ

First, Whether God loves a lying angel better than a true man?

Second, Whether the Archangel Uriel could affirm an untruth? and if he could, whether he would?

Third, Whether honesty be an angelic virtue, or not rather to be reckoned among those qualities which the schoolmen term *virtutes minus splendidæ*?

Fourth, Whether the higher order of Seraphim illuminati ever sneer?

Fifth, Whether pure intelligences can love?

Sixth, Whether the Seraphim ardentes do not manifest their virtues by the way of vision and theory? and whether practice be not a sub-celestial and merely human virtue?

Seventh, Whether the vision beatific be any thing more or less than a perpetual representment to each individual angel of his own present attainments and future capabilities, somehow in the manner of mortal looking-glasses, reflecting a perpetual complacency and self-satisfaction?

Eighth, and last, Whether an immortal and amenable soul may not come to be condemned at last, and the man never suspect it beforehand?

Learned Sir, my Friend,—Presuming on our long habits of friendship, and emboldened further by your late liberal permission to avail myself of your correspondence in case I want any knowledge, (which I intend to do when I have no Encyclopædia or Ladies'

Magazine at hand to refer to in any matter of science,) I now submit to your inquiries the above theological propositions, to be by you defended or oppugned, or both, in the Schools of Germany; whither, I am told, you are departing, to the utter dissatisfaction of your native Devonshire, and regret of universal England, but to my own individual consolation, if, through the channel of your wished return, learned sir, my friend, may be transmitted to this our island, from those famous theological wits of Leipsic and Gottingen, any rays of illumination, in vain to be derived from the home growth of our English halls and colleges. Finally wishing, learned sir, that you may see Schiller, and swing in a wood, (*vide* poems,) and sit upon a tun, and eat fat hams of Westphalia,

I remain

Your friend and docile pupil to instruct,

CHARLES LAMB.

CHAPTER II

SOUTHEY AND LLOYD: ENTER MANNING
JULY 1798—DECEMBER 1799

XXXII. TO ROBERT LLOYD

[? July, 1798.]

My dear Robert,—I am a good deal occupied with a calamity near home, but not so much as to prevent my thinking about you with the warmest affection. You are among my very dearest friends. I know you will feel deeply, when you hear that my poor sister is unwell again,—one of her old disorders; but I trust it will hold no longer than her former illnesses have done. Do not imagine, Robert, that I sink under this misfortune,—I have been season'd to such events, and think I could bear any thing tolerably well. My own health is left me, and my good spirits, and I have some duties to perform—these duties shall be *my object*. I wish, Robert, *you* could find an object—I know the painfulness of vacuity, all its achings, and inexplicable longings. I wish to God I could recommend any plan to you. Stock your mind well with religious knowledge; discipline it to wait with patience for duties, that may be your lot in life; prepare yourself not to expect too much out of yourself; *read* and *think*—— This is all common place advice, I know—I know too, that it is easy to give advice, which in like circumstances we might not follow ourselves. You must depend upon yourself—there will come a time, when

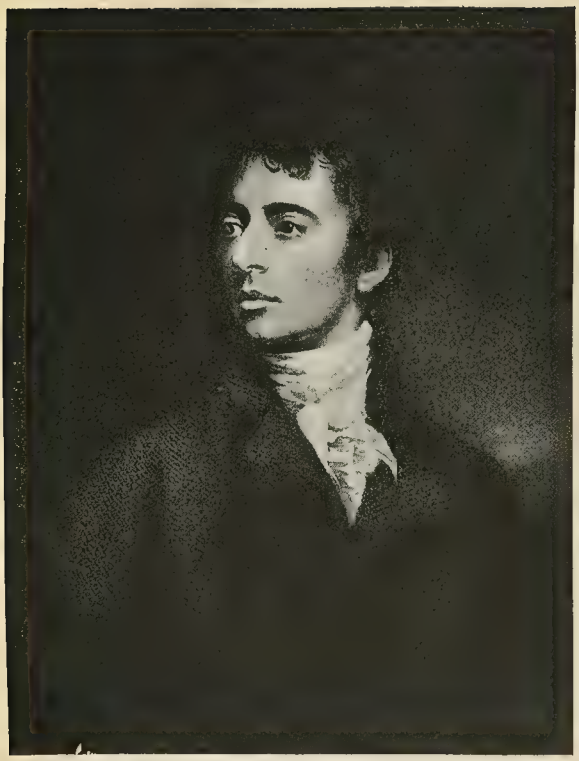
you will wonder you were not more content — I know you will excuse my saying any more,—

Be assur'd of my kindest warmest affection—C. LAMB.

XXXIII. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

July 28th, 1798.

Dear Southey,—I am ashamed that I have not thanked you before this for the *Joan of Arc*, but I did not know your address, and it did not occur to me to write through Cottle. The poem delighted me, and the notes amused me; but methinks she of Neufchatel, in the print, holds her sword too "like a dancer." I sent your *notice* to Phillips, particularly requesting an immediate insertion, but I suppose it came too late. I am sometimes curious to know what progress you make in that same "Calendar": whether you insert the nine worthies and Whittington? what you do or how you can manage when two Saints meet and quarrel for precedency? Martlemas, and Candlemas, and Christmas, are glorious themes for a writer like you, antiquity-bitten, smit with the love of boars' heads and rosemary; but how you can ennoble the 1st of April I know not. By the way, I had a thing to say, but a certain false modesty has hitherto prevented me: perhaps I can best communicate my wish by a hint. My birthday is on the 10th of February, New Style; but if it interferes with any remarkable event, why rather than my country should lose her fame, I care not if I put my nativity back eleven days. Fine family patronage for your "Calendar," if that old lady of prolific memory were living, who lies (or lyes) in some church in London, (saints forgive me, but I have forgot *what* church,) attesting that enormous legend of as many children as days in the year. I marvel her impudence did not grasp at a leap-year. Three hundred and sixty-five



Robert Southey, from an engraving by W. H. Egleton, after the picture by John Opie.

dedications, and all in a family! You might spit in spirit, on the oneness of Mæcenas's patronage!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, to the eternal regret of his native Devonshire, emigrates to Westphalia: "Poor Lamb," (these were his last words,) "if he wants any *knowledge*, he may apply to me." In ordinary cases I thanked him. I have an "Encyclopædia" at hand; but on such an occasion as going over to a German university, I could not refrain from sending him the following propositions, to be by him defended or oppugned (or both) at Leipsic or Gottingen.

THESES QUÆDAM THEOLOGICÆ

I

"Whether God loves a lying angel better than a true man?"

II

"Whether the archangel Uriel *could* knowingly affirm an untruth, and whether, if he *could*, he *would*?"

III

"Whether honesty be an angelic virtue, or not rather belonging to that class of qualities which the schoolmen term 'virtutes minus splendidæ et hominis et terræ nimis participes'?"

IV

"Whether, the seraphim ardentes do not manifest their goodness by the way of vision and theory? and whether practice be not a sub-celestial, and merely human virtue?"

V

"Whether the higher order of seraphim illuminati ever *sneer*?"

VI

"Whether pure intelligence can *love*, or whether they can love any thing besides pure intellect?"

VII

"Whether the beatific vision be any thing more or less than a perpetual representment to each individual angel of his own present attainments, and future capabilities, something in the manner of mortal looking glasses?"

VIII

"Whether an 'immortal and amenable soul' may not come *to be damned at last, and the man never suspect it beforehand*?"

Samuel Taylor (Coleridge) hath not deigned an answer. Was it impertinent of me to avail myself of that offered source of knowledge?

Wishing *Madoc* may be born into the world with as splendid promise as the second birth, or purification, of the Maid of Neufchatel,—I remain yours sincerely,

C. Lamb.

I hope Edith is better; my kindest remembrances to her. You have a good deal of trifling to forgive in this letter.

"Love and remembrances to Cottle."

XXXIV. TO ROBERT LLOYD

Aug. 1798.

My dear Robert,—Mary is better, and I trust that she will yet be restored to me, I am in good spirits, so do not be anxious about me:—I hope you get reconciled to your situation. The worst in it is that you have no *friend* to talk to; but wait in patience, and you will in good time make friends. The having a friend is not indispensibly necessary to virtue or happiness. Religion removes those barriers of sentiment which partition us from the disinterested love of our brethren—we are commanded to love our enemies, to do good to those that hate us. How much more is it our duty then to cultivate a forbearance and complacence towards those who only differ from us in dispositions and ways of thinking. There is always, without very unusual care there must always be, something of self in friendship: we love our friend because he is like ourselves. Can consequences altogether unmix'd and pure be reasonably expected from such a source—do not even the publicans and sinners the same? —— Say, that you love a friend for his moral qualities,—is it not rather because those qualities resemble what you fancy your own? —— this

then is not without danger. —— The only true cement of a valuable friendship, the only thing that even makes it not sinful, is when two friends propose to become mutually of benefit to each other in a moral or religious way. But even this friendship is perpetually liable to the mixture of something not pure— we love our friend, because he is *ours*: so we do our money, our wit, our knowledge, our virtue. And whereever this sense of appropriation and property enters, so much is to be subtracted from the value of that friendship or that virtue. Our duties are to do good expecting nothing again, to bear with contrary dispositions, to be candid and forgiving, not to crave and long after a communication of sentiment and feeling, but rather to avoid dwelling upon those feelings, however good, because they are our own. A man may be intemperate and selfish, who indulges in *good feelings*, for the mere pleasure they give him. I do not wish to deter you from making a friend, a true friend, and such a friendship where the parties are not blind to each others' faults, is very useful and valuable. I perceive a tendency in you to this error, Robert. I know you have chosen to take up an high opinion of my moral worth. But I say it before God, and I do not lie, you are mistaken in me. I could not bear to lay open all my failings to you, for the sentiment of shame would be too pungent. Let this be an example to you. ——

Robert, friends fall off, friends mistake us, they change, they grow unlike us, they go away, they die. But God is everlasting and uncapable of change, and to him we may look with chearful, unpresumptuous hope, while we discharge the duties of life in situations more untowardly than yours. You complain of the impossibility of improving yourself, but be assurd that the opportunity of improvement lies more in the mind than the situation. Humble yourself before God, cast out the selfish principle, wait in patience, do good in

every way you can to all sorts of people, never be easy to neglect a duty tho' a small one, praise God for all, and see his hand in all things, and he will in time raise you up *many friends*—or be himself instead an unchanging friend. —— God bless you. C. Lamb.

XXXV. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Oct. 18th, 1798.

Dear Southey,—I have at last been so fortunate as to pick up Wither's Emblems for you, that "old book and quaint," as the brief author of Rosamund Gray hath it; it is in a most detestable state of preservation, and the cuts are of a fainter impression than I have seen. Some child, the curse of antiquaries and bane of bibliopical rarities, hath been dabbling in some of them with its paint and dirty fingers; and, in particular, hath a little sullied the author's own portraiture, which I think valuable, as the poem that accompanies it is no common one; this last excepted, the Emblems are far inferior to old Quarles. I once told you otherwise, but I had not then read old Quarles with attention. I have picked up, too, another copy of Quarles for ninepence!!! O tempora! O lectores! so that if you have lost or parted with your own copy, say so, and I can furnish you, for you prize these things more than I do. You will be amused, I think, with honest Wither's "Supersedeas to all them whose custom it is, without any deserving, to importune authors to give unto them their books." I am sorry 'tis imperfect, as the lottery board annexed to it also is. Methinks you might modernise and elegantise this Supersedeas, and place it in front of your Joan of Arc, as a gentle hint to Messrs Parke, &c. One of the happiest emblems, and comicalest cuts, is the owl and little chirpers, page 63.

Wishing you all amusement, which your true emblem-fancier can scarce fail to find in even bad emblems, I remain your caterer to command,

C. Lamb.

Love and respects to Edith. I hope she is well. How does your Calendar prosper ?

XXXVI. TO THE SAME

October 29, 1798.

Dear Southey,—I thank you heartily for the Eclogue; it pleases me mightily, being so full of picture work and circumstances. I find no fault in it, unless perhaps that Joanna's ruin is a catastrophe too trite; and this is not the first or second time you have clothed your indignation, in verse, in a tale of ruined innocence. The old lady, spinning in the sun, I hope would not disdain to claim some kindred with old Margaret. I could almost wish you to vary some circumstances in the conclusion. A gentleman seducer has so often been described in prose and verse. What if you had accomplished Joanna's ruin by the clumsy arts and rustic gifts of some country-fellow ? I am thinking, I believe, of the song—

> "An old woman clothed in gray,
> Whose daughter was charming and young,
> And she was deluded away
> By Roger's false flattering tongue."

A Roger-Lothario would be a novel character; I think you might paint him very well. You may think this a very silly suggestion, and so indeed it is; but, in good truth, nothing else but the first words of that foolish ballad put me upon scribbling my *Rosamund.* But I thank you heartily for the poem. Not having any thing of my own to send you in return, (though, to tell truth, I am at work upon something, which, if I were to cut away and garble, perhaps I might send

you an extract or two that might not displease you; but I will not do that; and whether it will come to any thing I know not, for I am as slow as a Fleming painter, when I compose anything,) I will crave leave to put down a few lines of old Christopher Marlow's; I take them from his tragedy, *Jew of Malta.* The Jew is a famous character, quite out of nature; but, when we consider the terrible idea our simple ancestors had of a Jew, not more to be discommended for a certain discolouring (I think Addison calls it) than the witches and fairies of Marlow's mighty successor. The scene is betwixt *Barabbas*, the Jew, and *Ithamore*, a Turkish captive, exposed to sale for a slave.

BARABBAS

(*A precious rascal*)

"As for myself, I walk abroad a-nights,
And kill sick people groaning under walls.
Sometimes I go about, and poison wells;
And now and then to cherish Christian thieves,
I am content to lose some of my crowns.
That I may, walking in my gallery,
See 'm go pinion'd along by my door.
Being young, I studied physic, and began
To practise first upon the Italian:
There I enrich'd the priests with burials,
And always kept the sexton's arms in use
With digging graves, and ringing dead men's knells:
And after that was I an engineer,
And in the wars 'twixt France and Germany,
Under pretence of serving Charles the Fifth,
Slew friends and enemy with my stratagems,
Then after that I was an usurer,
And with extorting, cozening, forfeiting,
And tricks belonging unto brokery,
I fill'd the jails with bankrupts in a year,
And with young orphans planted hospitals,
And every moon made some or other mad,
And now and then one hang himself for grief,
Pinning upon his breast a long great scroll,
How I with interest had tormented him."

(Now hear Ithamore, the other gentle nature.)

ITHAMORE

(*A comical dog*)

"Faith, master, and I have spent my time
In setting Christian villages on fire,
Chaining of eunuchs, binding galley slaves.
One time I was an hostler at an inn,
And in the night time secretly would I steal
To travellers' chambers, and there cut their throats.
Once at Jerusalem, where the pilgrims kneel'd,
I strew'd powder on the marble stones,
And therewithal their knees would rankle so,
That I have laugh'd a good to see the cripples
Go limping home to Christendom on stilts."

BARABBAS

"Why, this is something."

There is a mixture of the ludicrous and the terrible in these lines, brimful of genius and antique invention, that at first reminded me of your old description of cruelty in hell, which was in the true Hogarthian style. I need not tell *you* that Marlow was author of that pretty madrigal, "Come live with me and be my Love," and of the tragedy of Edward II., in which are certain *lines* unequalled in our English tongue. Honest Walton mentions the said madrigal under the denomination of "certain smooth verses made long since by Kit Marlow."

I am glad you have put me on the scent after old Quarles. If I do not put up those eclogues, and that shortly, say I am no true-nosed hound. I have had a letter from Lloyd; the young metaphysician of Caius is well, and is busy recanting the new heresy, metaphysics, for the old dogma, Greek. My sister, I thank you, is quite well. She had a slight attack the other day, which frightened me a good deal, but it went of unaccountably. Love and respects to Edith.

Yours sincerely, C. Lamb.

XXXVII. TO THE SAME

Nov. 3. 1798.

I have read your Eclogue repeatedly, and cannot call it bald, or without interest; the cast of it and the design are completely original, and may set people upon thinking. It is as poetical as the subject requires, which asks no poetry; but it is defective in pathos. The woman's own story is the tamest part of it; I should like you to remould that: it too much resembles the young maid's history; both had been in service. Even the omission would not injure the poem: after the words "growing wants," you might, not unconnectedly, introduce "look at that little chub" down to "welcome one." And, decidedly, I would have you end it somehow thus,—

> "Give them at least this evening good meal.
> [*Gives her money.*
> Now, fare thee well; hereafter you have taught me
> To give sad meaning to the village bells," &c.

which would leave a stronger impression (as well as more pleasingly recall the beginning of the Eclogue) than the present commonplace reference to a better world, which the woman "must have heard at church." I should like you too a good deal to enlarge the most striking part, as it might have been, of the poem— "Is it idleness?" &c.: that affords a good field for dwelling on sickness, and inabilities, and old age. And you might also a good deal enrich the piece with a picture of a country wedding. The woman might very well, in a transient fit of oblivion, dwell upon the ceremony and circumstances of her own nuptials six years ago, the snugness of the bridegroom, the feastings, the cheap merriment, the welcomings, and the secret envyings of the maidens; then dropping all this, recur to her present lot. I do not know that I can suggest any thing else, or that I have suggested any thing new or material. I do not much prefer

this Eclogue to the last. Both are inferior to the former.

> " And when he came to shake me by the hand,
> And spake as kindly to me as he used,
> I hardly knew his voice—"

is the only passage that affected me. When servants speak their language ought to be plain, and not much raised above the common else I should find fault with the bathos of this passage,—

> " And when I heard the bell strike out,
> I thought (what ?) that I had never heard it toll
> So dismally before."

I like the destruction of the martens' old nests hugely, having just such a circumstance in my memory. I shall be very glad to see your remaining Ecologue, if not too much trouble, as you give me reason to expect it will be the second best. I shall be very glad to see some more poetry, though, I fear, your trouble in transcribing will be greater than the service my remarks may do them.

Yours affectionately, C. Lamb.

I cut my letter short because I am called off to business.

XXXVIII. TO THE SAME

Nov 8th, 1798.

I perfectly accord with your opinion of old Wither ; Quarles is a wittier writer, but Wither lays more hold of the heart. Quarles thinks of his audience when he lectures ; Wither soliloquizes in company from a full heart. What wretched stuff are the "Divine Fancies" of Quarles ! Religion appears to him no longer valuable than it furnishes matters for quibbles and riddles ; he turns God's grace into wantonness. Wither is like an old friend, whose warm-heartedness and estimable qualities make us wish he possessed more

genius, but at the same time make us willing to dispense with that want. I always love Wither, and sometimes admire Quarles. Still that portrait poem is a fine one; and the extract from "Shepherds' Hunting" places him in a starry height far above Quarles. If you wrote that review in the *Critical Review*, I am sorry you are so sparing of praise to the *Ancient Marinere*. So far from calling it as you do, with some wit, but more severity, a "Dutch Attempt," &c., I call it a right English attempt, and a successful one, to dethrone German sublimity. You have selected a passage fertile in unmeaning miracles, but have passed by fifty passages as miraculous as the miracles they celebrate. I never so deeply felt the pathetic as in that part,

> "A spring of love gush'd from my heart,
> And I bless'd them unaware."

It stung me into high pleasure through sufferings. Lloyd does not like it; his head is too metaphysical, and your taste too correct; at least I must allege something against you both, to excuse my own dotage—

> "So lonely 'twas, that God himself
> Scarce seem'd there to be!"—&c., &c.

But you allow some elaborate beauties: you should have extracted 'em. The *Ancient Marinere* plays more tricks with the mind than that last poem, which is yet one of the finest written. But I am getting too dogmatical; and before I degenerate into abuse, I will conclude with assuring you that I am

Sincerely yours,

C. Lamb.

I am going to meet Lloyd at Ware on Saturday, to return on Sunday. Have you any commands or commendations to the metaphysician? I shall be very happy if you will dine or spend any time with

me in your way through the great ugly city; but I know you have other ties upon you in these parts.

Love and respects to Edith, and friendly remembrances to Cottle.

XXXIX. TO ROBERT LLOYD

[November 17, 1798.]

Now 'tis Robert's turn. ——

My dear Robert,—one passage in your Letter a little displeas'd me. The rest was nothing but kindness, which Robert's letters are ever brimful of. You say that "this world to you seems drain'd of all its sweets!"—At first I had hoped you only meant to insinuate the high price of Sugar! but I am afraid you meant more. O Robert, I don't know what you call sweet. Honey and the honey comb, roses and violets, are yet in the earth. The sun and moon yet reign in Heaven, and the lesser lights keep up their pretty twinklings. Meats and drinks, sweet sights and sweet smells, a country walk, spring and autumn, follies and repentance, quarrels and reconcilements, have all a sweetness by turns. So good humour and good nature, friends at home that love you, and friends abroad that miss you—you possess all these things, and more innumerable: and these are all sweet things. You may extract honey from every thing; do not go a gathering after gall. The Bees are wiser in their generation than the race of sonnet writers and complainers: Bowles's and Charlotte Smiths, and all that tribe, who can see no joys, but what are past, and fill peoples' heads with notions of the unsatisfying nature of Earthly comforts. I assure you I find this world a very pretty place. My kind love to all your Sisters and to Thomas—he never writes to me—and tell Susanna I forgive her.

C. Lamb.

XL. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

[*Before* Nov. 28, 1798]

The following is a second extract from my tragedy —*that is to be*. 'Tis narrated by an old Steward to Margaret, orphan ward of Sir Walter Woodvil. . . . This and the Dying Lover I gave you are the only extracts I can give without mutilation. . . . I expect you to like the old woman's curse:—

Old Steward.—One summer night, Sir Walter, as it chanced,
Was pacing to and fro in the avenue
That westward fronts our house,
Among those aged oaks, said to have been planted
Three hundred years ago
By a neighbouring Prior of the Woodvil name, &c.

This is the extract I bragged of as superior to that I sent you from Marlow: perhaps you will smile. But I should like your remarks on the above, as you are deeper witch-read than I.

Yours ever,

C. Lamb.

Rob. Southey, Esq.,
Mr Cottle's, Bookseller,
High Street, Bristol.

XLI. TO ROBERT LLOYD

Novr. 20th 98.

As the little copy of verses I sent gave Priscilla and Robert some pleasure, I now send them another little tale, which is all I can send, for my stock will be exhausted.

Tis a tale of witchcraft, told by an old Steward in the family to Margaret, the ward of Sir Walter Woodvil. *Who* Sir Walter is, you may come to know bye and bye, when I have finished a Poem, from which this and the other are extracts, and all the extracts I can make without mutilating.——

Old Steward. One summer night Sir Walter, as it chanc'd,
Was pacing to and fro in the avenue
That westward fronts our house,
Among those aged oaks said to have been planted
Three hundred years ago
By a neighb'ring Prior of the Woodvil name;
But so it was,
Being o'er task'd in thought he heeded not
The importune suit of one that stood by the gate,
And begg'd an alms.
Some say, he shov'd her rudely from the gate,
With angry chiding; but I can never think,
(Sir Walter's nature hath a sweetness in it,)
That he could treat a woman, an old woman,
With such discourtesy,
For old she was who begg'd an alms of him.
Well, he refus'd her,
(Whether for importunity I know not,
Or that she came between his meditations,)
But better had he met a Lion in the Streets,
Than this old woman that night,
For she was one who practis'd the black arts,
And serv'd the Devil, being since burn'd for witchcraft.
She look'd at him like one that meant to blast him;
And with a frightful noise
('Twas partly like a woman's voice,
And partly like the hissing of a snake,)
She nothing spake but this: Sir Walter told the words,
A mischief, mischief, mischief,
And a nine times killing curse,
By day and by night to the caitive wight,
Who shakes the poor, like snakes, from his door,
And shuts up the womb of his purse:
And a mischief, mischief, mischief,
And a nine fold with'ring curse,—
For that shall come to thee, that will undo thee,
Both all that thou fears't and worse—
These words four times repeated, she departed,
Leaving Sir Walter like a man, beneath
Whose feet a scaffolding had suddenly fall'n!

Margaret. A terrible curse!

Old Steward. O Lady! such bad things are told of that old woman,
You would be loth to hear them!
As, namely, that the milk she gave was sour,
And the babe, who suck'd her, shrivelled like a mandrake! *
And none could tell what ail'd him; for he lay,
And pin'd, and pin'd, till all his hair came off,
And he, that was full flesh'd, became as thin
And things besides, with a bigger horror in them,
Almost, I think, unlawful to be told!

Margaret. Then I must never hear them. But proceed,
And say what follow'd on the witches' curse.
Old Steward. Nothing immediate; but some nine months after
Young Stephen Woodvil suddenly fell sick,
As a two month's babe that has been starved in the nursing.
And sure, I think
He bore his illness like a little child,
With such rare sweetness, and dumb melancholy,
He strove to clothe his agony in smiles,
Which he would force up in his poor pale cheeks,
Like ill-tim'd guests that had no proper dwelling there,
And when they ask'd him his complaint, he laid
His hand upon his heart to shew the place,
Where Susan came to him a nights, he said,
And prick'd him with a pin.
And thereupon Sir Walter call'd to mind
The beggar witch who stood in the gateway,
And begg'd an alms.
Margaret. And so he died?
Old Steward. Tis thought so.
Margaret. But did the witch confess?
Old Steward. All this, and more at her death.
Margaret. I do not love to credit tales of magic.
Heaven's music, which in order seems unstrung,
And this brave world,
Creation's beauteous workmanship, unbeautify'd,
Disorder'd, marr'd, where such strange things are acted.

* A *mandrake* is a root resembling the human form, as sometimes a carrot does, and the old superstition is, that when the mandrake is torn out of the earth a dreadful shriek is heard, which makes all who hear it go mad. 'Tis a fatal poison besides.

I will here conclude my tiny portion of Prose with hoping you may like the story, and my kind remembrances to all.

C. Lamb.

Write soon, Robert.

XLII. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Nov. 28th, 1798.

I can have no objection to your printing "Mystery of God" with my name, and all due acknowledgments

Charles Lloyd, the Poet, reading a play written by S. T. Coleridge, at Brathay Hall, from a sketch in the possession of F. H. Steeds, Esq.

for the honour and favour of the communication; indeed, 'tis a poem that can dishonour no name. Now, that is in the true strain of modern modesto-vanitas. . . . But for the sonnet, I heartily wish it, as I thought it was, dead and forgotten. If the exact circumstances under which I wrote could be known or told, it would be an interesting sonnet; but to an indifferent and stranger reader it must appear a very bald thing, certainly inadmissible in a compilation. I wish you could affix a different name to the volume. There is a contemptible book, a wretched assortment of vapid feelings, entitled *Pratt's Gleanings*, which hath damned and impropriated the title for ever. Pray think of some other. The gentleman is better known (better had he remained unknown) by an Ode to Benevolence, written and spoken for and at the annual dinner of the Humane Society, who walk in procession once a year, with all the objects of their charity before them, to return God thanks for giving them such benevolent hearts.

I like "Bishop Bruno," but not so abundantly as your "Witch Ballad," which is an exquisite thing of its kind.

I showed my "Witch" and "Dying Lover" to Dyer last night; but George could not comprehend how *that* could be poetry which did not go upon ten feet, as George and his predecessor had taught it to do; so George read me some lectures on the distinguishing qualities of the Ode, the Epigram, and the Epic, and went home to illustrate his doctrine, by correcting a proof sheet of his own Lyrics. George writes odes where the rhymes, like fashionable man and wife, keep a comfortable distance of six or eight lines apart, and calls that "observing the laws of verse"! George tells you, before he recites, that you must listen with great attention, or you'll miss the rhymes. I did so, and found them pretty exact. George, speaking of the dead Ossian, exclaimeth,

"Dark are the poet's eyes!" I humbly represented to him that his own eyes were dark, and many a living bard's besides, and recommended "Closed are the poet's eyes." But that would not do. I found there was an antithesis between the darkness of his eyes and the splendour of his genius; and I acquiesced.

Your recipe for a Turk's poison is invaluable, and truly Marlowish. . . . . Lloyd objects to "shutting up the womb of his purse" in my curse; (which, for a Christian witch in a Christian country, is not too mild, I hope). Do you object? I think there is a strangeness in the idea, as well as "shaking the poor like snakes from his door," which suits the speaker. Witches illustrate, as fine ladies do, from their own familiar objects, and snakes and the shutting up of wombs are in their way. I don't know that this last charge has been before brought against 'em, nor either the sour milk or the mandrake babe; but I affirm these be things a witch would do if she could.

My Tragedy will be a medley (as I intend it to be a medley) of laughter and tears, prose and verse, and in some places rhyme, songs, wit, pathos, humour, and, if possible, sublimity; at least it is not a fault in my intention if it does not comprehend most of these discordant atoms. Heaven send they dance not the "Dance of Death"! I hear that the Two Noble Englishmen have parted no sooner than they set foot on German earth; but I have not heard the reason. Possibly to give moralists an handle to exclaim, "Ah me! what things are perfect?" I think I shall adopt your emendation in the "Dying Lover," though I do not myself feel the objection against "Silent Prayer."

My tailor has brought me home a new coat lapelled, with a velvet collar. He assures me every body wears velvet collars now. Some are born fashionable, some achieve fashion, and others, like your humble servant, have fashion thrust upon them. The rogue has been making inroads hitherto by modest degrees,

foisting upon me an additional button, recommending gaiters; but to come upon me thus, in a full tide of luxury, neither becomes him as a tailor nor the ninth of a man. My meek gentleman was robbed the other day, coming with his wife and family in a one-horse shay from Hampstead. The villains rifled him of four guineas, some shillings and half-pence, and a bundle of customers' measures, which they swore were bank notes. They did not shoot him, and when they rode off he addrest them with profound gratitude, making a congee: "Gentlemen, I wish you good night, and we are very much obliged to you that you have not used us ill!" And this is the cuckoo that has had the audacity to foist upon me ten buttons on a side, and a black velvet collar! A cursed ninth of a scoundrel!

When you write to Lloyd, he wishes his Jacobin correspondents to address him as *Mr* C. L. Love and respects to Edith. I hope she is well.

Yours sincerely,

C. Lamb.

XLIII. TO THE SAME

Dec. 27, 1798.

Dear Southey, — Your friend John May has formerly made kind offers to Lloyd of serving me in the India House by the interest of his friend Sir Francis Baring. It is not likely that I shall ever put his goodness to the test on my own account, for my prospects are very comfortable. But I know a man, a young man, whom he could serve thro' the same channel, and I think would be disposed to serve if he were acquainted with his case. This poor fellow (whom I know just enough of to vouch for his strict integrity and worth) has lost two or three employments from illness, which he cannot regain; he was

once insane, and from the distressful uncertainty of his livelihood, has reason to apprehend a return of that malady. He has been for some time dependant on a woman whose lodger he formerly was, but who can ill afford to maintain him, and I know that on Christmas night last he actually walked about the streets all night, rather than accept of her Bed which she offer'd him, and offer'd herself to sleep in the kitchen: and that in consequence of that severe cold he is labouring under a bilious disorder, besides a depression of spirits which incapacitates him from exertion when he most needs it. For God's sake, Southey, if it does not go against you to ask favors, do it now, ask it as for me—but do not do a violence to your feelings, because he does not know of this application, and will suffer no disappointment. What I meant to say was this—there are in the India House what are called *Extra Clerks*, not on the Establishment, like me, but employed in Extra business, by-jobs,—these get about £50 a year, or rather more, but never rise. A Director can put in at any time a young man in this office, and it is by no means consider'd so great a favor as making an establish'd Clerk. He would think himself as rich as an Emperor if he could get such a certain situation, and be relieved from those disquietudes which I do fear may one day bring back his distemper.

You know John May better than I do, but I know enough to believe that he is a good man—he did make me that offer that I have mention'd, but you will perceive that such an offer cannot authorize me in applying for another Person.

But I cannot help writing to you on the subject, for the young man is perpetually before my eyes, and I should feel it a crime not to strain all my petty interest to do him service, tho' I put my own delicacy to the question by so doing. I have made one other unsuccessful attempt already.

At all events I will thank you to write, for I am tormented with anxiety.

I suppose you have somehow heard that poor Mary Dollin has poisoned herself, after some interviews with John Reid, the *ci-devant* Alphonso of her days of hope. How is Edith?

C. Lamb.

XLIV. TO THE SAME

Jan. 21st, 1799.

I am requested by Lloyd to excuse his not replying to a kind letter received from you. He is at present situated in most distressful family perplexities, which I am not at liberty to explain, but they are such as to demand all the strength of his mind, and quite exclude any attention to foreign objects. His brother Robert (the flower of his family) hath eloped from the persecutions of his father, and has taken shelter with me. What the issue of his adventure will be, I know not. He hath the sweetness of an angel in his heart, combined with admirable firmness of purpose; an uncultivated, but very original, and I think, superior, genius. But this step of his is but a small part of their family troubles.

I am to blame for not writing to you before on *my own account*; but I know you can dispense with the expressions of gratitude, or I should have thanked you before for all May's kindness. He has liberally supplied the person I spoke to you of with money, and had procured him a situation just after himself had lighted upon a similar one, and engaged too far to recede. But May's kindness was the same, and my thanks to you and him are the same. May went about on this business as if it had been his own. But you knew John May before this, so I will be silent.

I shall be very glad to hear from you when convenient. I do not know how your Calendar and

other affairs thrive; but above all, I have not heard a great while of your "Madoc"—the *opus magnum.* I would willingly send you something to give a value to this letter; but I have only one slight passage to send you, scarce worth the sending, which I want to edge in somewhere into my play, which, by the way, hath not received the addition of ten lines, besides, since I saw you. A father, old Walter Woodvil, (the witch's *protégé*,) relates this of his son John, who "fought in adverse armies," being a royalist, and his father a parliamentary man:—

"I saw him in the day of Worcester fight,
Whither he came at twice seven years,
Under the discipline of the Lord Falkland,
(His uncle by the mother's side,
Who gave his youthful politics a bent
Quite *from* the principles of his father's house;)
There did I see this valiant Lamb of Mars,
This spring of honour, this unbearded John,
This veteran in green years, this sprout, this Woodvil,
(With dreadless ease guiding a fire-hot steed,
Which seem'd to scorn the manage of a boy,)
Prick forth with such a *mirth* into the field,
To mingle rivalship and acts of war
Even with the sinewy masters of the art.
You would have thought the work of blood had been
A play-game merely, and the rabid Mars
Had put his harmful hostile nature off,
To instruct raw youth in images of war,
And practice of the unedged players' foils.
The rough fanatic and blood-practised soldiery
Seeing such hope and virtue in the boy,
Disclosed their ranks to let him pass unhurt,
Checking their swords' uncivil injuries,
As loth to mar that curious workmanship
Of Valour's beauty portray'd in his face."

Lloyd objects to "portrayed in his face," do you? I like the line.

I shall clap this in somewhere. I think there is a spirit through the lines; perhaps the 7th, 8th, and 9th owe their origin to Shakspeare, though no image is borrowed.

He says in *Henry the Fourth*—

> "This infant Hotspur
> Mars in swathing clothes."

But pray did Lord Falkland die before Worcester fight? In that case I must make bold to unclify some other nobleman.

Kind love and respects to Edith.

C. LAMB.

XLV. TO THE SAME

March 15th, 1799.

Dear Southey,—I have received your little volume, for which I thank you, though I do not entirely approve of this sort of intercourse, where the presents are all one side. I have read the last Eclogue again with great pleasure. It hath gained considerably by abridgment, and now I think it wants nothing but enlargement. You will call this one of tyrant Procrustes's criticisms, to cut and pull so to his own standard; but the old lady is so great a favourite with me, I want to hear more of her; and of "Joanna" you have given us still less. But the picture of the rustics leaning over the bridge, and the old lady travelling abroad on summer evening to see her garden watered, are images so new and true, that I decidedly prefer this "Ruin'd Cottage" to any poem in the book. Indeed I think it the only one that will bear comparison with your "Hymn to the Penates," in a former volume.

I compare dissimilar things, as one would a rose and a star, for the pleasure they give us, or as a child soon learns to choose between a cake and a rattle; for dissimilars have mostly some points of comparison.

The next best poem, I think, is the first Eclogue; 'tis very complete, and abounding in little pictures and realities. The remainder Eclogues, excepting only the "Funeral," I do not greatly admire. I miss *one*,

which had at least as good a title to publication as the "Witch," or the "Sailor's Mother." You call'd it the "Last of the Family." The "Old Woman of Berkeley" comes next; in some humours I would give it the preference above any. But who the devil is Matthew of Westminster? You are as familiar with these antiquated monastics, as Swedenborg, or, as his followers affect to call him, the Baron, with his invisibles. But you have raised a very comic effect out of the true narrative of Matthew of Westminster. 'Tis surprising with how little addition you have been able to convert, with so little alteration, his incidents, meant for terror, into circumstances and food for the spleen. The Parody is *not* so successful; it has one famous line, indeed, which conveys the finest deathbed image I ever met with:—

"The doctor whisper'd the nurse, and the surgeon knew what he said."

But the offering the bride three times bears not the slightest analogy or proportion to the fiendish noises three times heard! In "Jaspar," the circumstance of the great light is very affecting. But I had heard you mention it before. The "Rose" is the only insipid piece in the volume; it hath neither thorns nor sweetness; and, besides, set all chronology and probability at defiance.

"Cousin Margaret," you know, I like. The allusions to the *Pilgrim's Progress* are particularly happy, and harmonize tacitly and delicately with old cousins and aunts. To familiar faces we do associate familiar scenes and accustomed objects: but what hath Apollidon and his sea-nymphs to do in these affairs? Apollyon I could have borne, though he stands for the devil; but who is Appollidon? I think you are too apt to conclude faintly, with some cold moral, as in the end of the poem called "The Victory"—

"Be thou her comforter, who art the widow's friend";

a single common-place line of comfort, which bears no proportion in weight or number to the many lines which describe suffering. This is to convert religion into mediocre feelings, which should burn, and glow, and tremble. A moral should be wrought into the body and soul, the matter and tendency of a poem, not tagged to the end, like a "God send the good ship into harbour," at the conclusion of our bills of lading. The finishing of the "Sailor" is also imperfect. Any dissenting minister may say and do as much.

These remarks, I know, are crude and unwrought, but I do not lay much claim to accurate thinking. I never judge system-wise of things, but fasten upon particulars. After all, there is a great deal in the book that I must, for time, leave *unmentioned*, to deserve my thanks for its own sake, as well as for the friendly remembrances implied in the gift. I again return you my thanks.

Pray present my love to Edith.

C. L.

XLVI. TO THE SAME

March 20th, 1799.

I am hugely pleased with your "Spider," "your old freemason," as you call him. The first three stanzas are delicious; they seem to me a compound of Burns and Old Quarles, the kind of home-strokes, where more is felt than strikes the ear; a terseness, a jocular pathos, which makes one feel in laughter. The measure, too, is novel and pleasing. I could almost wonder Robert Burns in his lifetime never stumbled upon it. The fourth stanza is less striking, as being less original. The fifth falls off. It has no felicity of phrase, no old-fashioned phrase or feeling.

"Young hopes, and love's delightful dreams,"

savour neither of Burns nor Quarles; they seem more like shreds of many a modern sentimental sonnet. The last stanza hath nothing striking in it, if I except the two concluding lines, which are Burns all over. I wish, if you concur with me, these things could be looked to. I am sure this is a kind of writing, which comes ten-fold better recommended to the heart, comes there more like a neighbour or familiar, than thousands of Hamnels, and Zillahs, and Madelons. I beg you will send me the "Holly Tree," if it at all resemble this, for it must please me. I have never seen it. I love this sort of poems, that open a new intercourse with the most despised of the animal and insect race. I think this vein may be further opened. Peter Pindar hath very prettily apostrophized a fly; Burns hath his mouse and his louse; Coleridge less successfully hath made overtures of intimacy to a jackass, therein only following, at unresembling distance, Sterne, and greater Cervantes. Besides these, I know of no other examples of breaking down the partition between us and our "poor earth-born companions." It is sometimes revolting to be put in a track of feeling by other people, not one's own immediate thoughts, else I would persuade you, if I could, (I am in earnest,) to commence a series of these animals' poems, which might have a tendency to rescue some poor creatures from the antipathy of mankind. Some thoughts came across me: for instance—to a rat, to a toad, to a cockchafer, to a mole. People bake moles alive by a slow oven fire to cure consumption. Rats are, indeed, the most despised and contemptible parts of God's earth. I killed a rat the other day by punching him to pieces, and feel a weight of blood upon me to this hour. Toads you know are made to fly, and tumble down and crush all to pieces. Cockchafers are old sport. Then again to a worm, with an apostrophe to anglers, those patient tyrants, meek inflictors of pangs intoler-

able, cool devils; to an owl; to all snakes, with an apology for their poison; to a cat in boots or bladders. Your own fancy, if it takes a fancy to these hints, will suggest many more. A series of such poems, suppose them accompanied with plates descriptive of animal torments, cooks roasting lobsters, fishmongers crimping skates, &c., &c. would take excessively. I will willingly enter into a partnership in the plan with you: I think my heart and soul would go with it too —at least, give it a thought. My plan is but this minute come into my head; but it strikes me instantaneously as something new, good, and useful, full of pleasure, and full of moral. If old Quarles and Wither could live again, we would invite them into our firm. Burns hath done his part.

Poor Sam. Le Grice! I am afraid the world, and the camp, and the university, have spoilt him among them. 'Tis certain he had at one time a strong capacity of turning out something better. I knew him, and that not long since, when he had a most warm heart. I am ashamed of the indifference I have sometimes felt towards him. I think the devil is in one's heart. I am under obligations to that man for the warmest friendship, and heartiest sympathy exprest both by word and deed and tears for me, when I was in my greatest distress. But I have forgot that! as, I fear, he has nigh forgot the awful scenes which were before his eyes when he served the office of a comforter to me. No service was too mean or troublesome for him to perform. I can't think what but the devil, "that old spider," could have suck'd my heart so dry of its sense of all gratitude. If he does come in your way, Southey, fail not to tell him that I retain a most affectionate remembrance of his old friendliness, and an earnest wish to resume our intercourse. In this I am serious. I cannot recommend him to your society, because I am afraid whether he be quite worthy of it; but I have

no right to dismiss him from *my* regard. He was at one time, and in the worst of times, my own familiar friend, and great comfort to me then. I have known him to play at cards with my father, meal-times excepted, literally all day long, in long days too, to save me from being teased by the old man, when I was not able to bear it.

God bless him for it, and God bless you, Southey.

C. L.

XLVII. TO THE SAME

[Postmarked] May 20th 1799.

Dear Southey,—Lloyd will now be able to give you an account of himself, so to him I leave you for satisfaction. Great part of his troubles are lightened by the partial recovery of his sister, who had been alarmingly ill with similar diseases to his own. The other part of the family troubles sleeps for the present, but I fear will awake at some future time to *confound* and *disunite*. He will probably tell you all about it. Robert still continues here with me, his father has proposed nothing, but would willingly lure him back with fair professions. But Robert is endowed with a wise fortitude, and in this business has acted quite from himself and wisely acted. His parents must come forward in the end. I like reducing parents to a sense of undutifulness. I like confounding the relations of life. Pray let me see you when you come to town, and contrive to give me some of your company.

I thank you heartily for your intended presents, but do by no means see the necessity you are under of burthening yourself thereby. You have read old Wither's Supersedeas to small purpose. You object to my pauses being at the end of my lines. I do not know any great difficulty I should find in diversifying or changing my blank verse; but I go upon the model

of Shakspeare in my Play, and endeavour after a colloquial ease and spirit, something like him. I could so easily imitate Milton's versification; but my ear & feeling would reject it, or any approaches to it, in the *drama*. I do not know whether to be glad or sorry that witches have been detected aforetimes in shutting up of wombs. I certainly invented that conceit, and its coincidence with fact is incidental, for I never heard it. I have not seen those verses on Col. Despard—I do not read any newspapers. Are they short, to copy without much trouble? I should like to see them.

I just send you a few rhymes from my play, the only rhymes in it—a forest-liver giving an account of his amusements :—

> "What sports have you in the forest?
> Not many,—some few,—as thus,
> To see the sun to bed, and see him rise,
> Like some hot amourist with glowing eyes,
> Bursting the lazy bands of sleep that bound him
> With all his fires and travelling glories round him:
> Sometimes the moon on soft night-clouds to rest,
> Like beauty nestling in a young man's breast,
> And all the winking stars, her handmaids, keep
> Admiring silence, while those lovers sleep:
> Sometimes outstretch'd in very idleness,
> Nought doing, saying little, thinking less,
> To view the leaves, thin dancers upon air,
> Go eddying round; and small birds how they fare,
> When mother Autumn fills their beaks with corn,
> Filch'd from the careless Amalthea's horn;
> And how the woods berries and worms provide,
> Without their pains, when earth has nought beside
> To answer their small wants;
> To view the graceful deer come trooping by,
> Then pause, and gaze, then turn they know not why,
> Like bashful younkers in society;
> To mark the structure of a plant or tree;
> And all fair things of earth, how fair they be!" &c. &c.

I love to anticipate charges of unoriginality: the first line is almost Shakspere's :—

> "To have my love to bed and to arise."
> *Midsummer Night's Dream.*

I think there is a sweetness in the versification not unlike some rhymes in that exquisite play, and the last line but three is yours:

> "An eye
> That met the gaze, or turn'd it knew not why."
> *Rosamund's Epistle.*

I shall anticipate all my play, and have nothing to show you.

An idea for Leviathan.

Commentators on Job have been puzzled to find out a meaning for Leviathan,—'tis a whale, say some; a crocodile, say others. In my simple conjecture, Leviathan is neither more nor less than the Lord Mayor of London for the time being.

"Rosamund" sells well in London, maugre the non-reviewal of it.

I sincerely wish you better health, and better health to Edith. Kind remembrances to her.

C. LAMB.

If you come to town by Ash Wensday, you will certainly see Lloyd here—I expect him by that time.

My sister Mary was never in better health or spirits than now.

Robert Southey,
Joseph Cottle's, Bookseller,
High Street, Bristol.

XLVIII. TO ROBERT LLOYD

[? Sept.-Oct. 1799.]

My dear Robert,—I suppose by this time you have returned from Worcester with Uncle Nehemiah. You neglected to inform me whether Charles is yet at Birm. I have heard here, that he is returned to Cambridge. Give him a gentle tap on the shoulder

to remind him how truly acceptable a letter from him would be. I have nothing to write about.

Thomson remains with me. He is perpetually getting into mental vagaries. He is in Love and tosses and tumbles about in his bed, like a man in a barrel of spikes. He is more sociable; but I am heartily sick of his domesticating with me; he wants so many sympathies of mine, and I want his, that we are daily declining into *civility*. I shall be truly glad when he is gone. I find 'tis a dangerous experiment to grow too familiar. Some natures cannot bear it without converting into indifference—I know but one Being that I could ever consent to live perpetually with, and that is Robert. But Robert must go whither prudence and paternal regulations indicate a way. I shall not soon forget you—do not fear that—nor grow cool towards Robert. My not writing is no proof of these disloyalties. Perhaps I am unwell, or vexed, or spleen'd, or something, when I should otherwise write.

Assure Charles of my unalterable affections, and present my warmest wishes for his and Sophia's happiness. How goes on Priscilla? I am much pleased with his Poems in the *Anthology*—one in particular. The other is a kind and no doubt just tribute to Robert and Olivia; but I incline to opinion that these domestic addresses should not always be made public. I have, I know, more than once exposed my own secretest feelings of that nature, but I am sorry that I did.—Nine out of ten readers laugh at them.—When a man dies leaving the name of a great Author behind him, any unpublished relicks which let one into his domestic retirements are greedily gathered up, which in his life time, and before his fame had ripened, would by many be considered as impertinent. But if Robert and his sister were gratify'd with seeing their brother's heart in Print, let the rest of the world go hang. They may prefer the remaining trumpery of the *Anthology*.

All I mean to say is, I think I perceive an indelicacy in thus exposing one's virtuous feelings to criticism. But of delicacy Charles is at least as true a judge as myself. Pray request him to let me somehow have a sight of his novel. I declined offering it here for sale for good reasons as I thought—being unknown to Booksellers, and not made for making bargains—but for that reason I am not to be punished with not seeing the book. I shall count it a kindness if Chas. will send me the manuscript, which shall certainly be returned.

(Remainder of letter missing.)

XLIX. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Oct. 31st, 1799.

Dear Southey,—I have but just got your letter, being returned from Herts, where I have passed a few red-letter days with much pleasure. I would describe the county to you, as you have done by Devonshire; but alas! I am a poor pen at that same. I could tell you of an old house with a tapestry bedroom, the "Judgment of Solomon" composing one panel, and "Actæon spying Diana naked" the other. I could tell of an old marble hall, with Hogarth's prints, and the Roman Cæsars in marble hung round. I could tell of a *wilderness*, and of a village church, and where the bones of my honoured grandam lie; but there are feelings which refuse to be translated, sulky aborigines, which will not be naturalized in another soil. Of this nature are old family faces, and scenes of infancy.

I have given your address, and the books you want, to the Arches; they will send them as soon as they can get them, but they do not seem quite familiar to their names. I have seen Gebor! Gebor aptly so denominated from Geborish, *quasi* Gibberish. But Gebor hath some lucid intervals. I remember darkly

one beautiful simile veiled in uncouth phrases about the youngest daughter of the Ark. I shall have nothing to communicate, I fear, to the Anthology. You shall have some fragments of my play, if you desire them; but I think I would rather print it whole. Have you seen it, or shall I lend you a copy? I want your opinion of it.

I must get to business; so farewell. My kind remembrances to Edith. C. LAMB.

L. TO THOMAS MANNING

Dec. 1799.

Dear Manning,—The particular kindness, even up to a degree of attachment, which I have experienced from you, seems to claim some distinct acknowledgment on my part. I could not content myself with a bare remembrance to you, conveyed in some letter to Lloyd.

Will it be agreeable to you, if I occasionally recruit your memory of me, which must else soon fade, if you consider the brief intercourse we have had. I am not likely to prove a troublesome correspondent. My scribbling days are past. I shall have no sentiments to communicate, but as they spring up from some living and worthy occasion.

I look forward with great pleasure to the performance of your promise, that we should meet in London early in the ensuing year. The century must needs commence auspiciously for me, that brings with it Manning's friendship, as an earnest of its after gifts.

I should have written before, but for a troublesome inflammation in one of my eyes, brought on by night travelling with the coach windows sometimes up.

What more I have to say shall be reserved for a letter to Lloyd. I must not prove tedious to you

in my first outset, lest I should affright you by my ill-judged loquacity.

I am, yours most sincerely,

C. Lamb.

LI. TO ROBERT LLOYD

17 Dec. '99.

Dear Rab.—Thy presents will be most acceptable, whenever they come, both for thy sake, and for the liquor, which is a beverage I most admire. Wine makes me hot, and brandy makes me drunk, but porter warms without intoxication; and elevates, yet not too much above the point of tranquillity. But I hope Robert will come himself, before the tap is out. He may be assured, that his good honest company is the most valuable present, after all, he can make us. These cold nights crave something, beside Porter; good English mirth and heart's ease. Rob must contrive to pass some of his Christmas with us, or at least drink in the century with a welcome.

I have not seen your father or Priscilla since. Your father was in one of his best humours, (I have seldom seen him in one not good,)—and after dinner, while we were sitting comfortably before the parlour fire, after our wine, he beckoned me suddenly out of the room. I, expecting some secrets, followed him, but it was only to go and sit with him in the old forsaken counting house; which he declared to be the pleasantest spot in the house to him, and told me how much business used to be done there in former days. Your father whimsically mixes the good man and the man of business in his manners, but he is not less a good man for being a man of business. He has conceived great hopes of thy one day uniting both characters, and I joyfully expect the same.

I hope to see Priscilla, for the first time, some day the end of this week, but think it at least dubious, as

Charles Lloyd, the Poet, and his Wife,
From a sketch in the possession of F. H. Steeds, Esq.

she stays in town but one day, I think your father said.—

I wonder Rob. could think, I should take his presents in evil part. I am sure from him they are the genuine result of a sincere friendship, not immediately knowing, how better to express itself. I shall enjoy them with tenfold gust, as being his presents.—At the same time, I must remind him, that such expressions, if too thickly repeated, would be in danger of proving oppressive.

I am not fond of presents all on one side, and Rob. knows I have little to present to him, except the assurances of an undiminished and an undiminishable friendship. Rob. will take as a hint, what his friend does not mean as an affront—I hope our friendship will stand firm, without the help of scaffolding.

At the same time I am determined to enjoy Robert's present, and to drink his health in his own porter, and I hope he will be able to partake with us. Bread and Cheese and a hearty sympathy may prove no bad supplement to Robert's good old English beverage. —Charles has not written to me since I saw him. I trust he goes on as comfortably as I witness'd.— No husband and wife can be happier than Sophia and your Brother appear to be in each other's company. Robert must marry next—I look to see him get the start of Wordsworth and Priscilla, whom yet I wish to see united.

farewell, dearest Rab,

C. L.

Mary joins with me in remembrances to Robert, and in expectation of the coming beverage—

Do you think you shall be able to come ?—

Monday night, just Porter time.

LII. TO THOMAS MANNING

Dec. 28th, 1799.

Dear Manning,—Having suspended my correspondence a decent interval, as knowing that even good things may be taken to satiety, a wish cannot but recur to learn whether you be still well and happy. Do all things continue in the state I left them in Cambridge?

Do your night parties still flourish? and do you continue to bewilder your company with your thousand faces, running down through all the keys of idiotism (like Lloyd over his perpetual harpsichord), from the smile and the glimmer of half-sense and quarter-sense, to the grin and hanging lip of Betty Foy's own Johnny? And does the face-dissolving curfew sound at twelve? How unlike the great originals were your petty terrors in the postscript! not fearful enough to make a fairy shudder, or a Lilliputian fine lady, eight months full of child, miscarry. Yet one of them, which had more beast than the rest, I thought faintly resembled *one* of your brutifications. But, seriously, I long to see your own honest Manning-face again. I did not mean a pun,—your *man's* face, you will be apt to say, I know your wicked will to pun. I cannot now write to Lloyd and you too; so you must convey as much interesting intelligence as this may contain, or be thought to contain, to him and Sophia, with my dearest love and remembrances.

By the by, I think you and Sophia both incorrect with regard to the *title* of the *play*. Allowing your objection, (which is not necessary, as pride may be, and is in real life often, cured by misfortunes not directly originating from its own acts, as Jeremy Taylor will tell you a naughty desire is sometimes sent to cure it; I know you read these *practical divines*;)—but allowing your objection, does not the betraying of his

father's secret directly spring from pride?—from the pride of wine, and a full heart, and a proud over-stepping of the ordinary rules of morality, and contempt of the prejudices of mankind, which are not to bind superior souls—"as *trust* in *the matter* of *secrets* all *ties* of *blood*, &c., &c., keeping of *promises*, the feeble mind's religion, binding our *morning knowledge* to the performance of what *last night's ignorance* spake" —does he not prate, that "*Great Spirits*" must do more than die for their friend? Does not the pride of wine incite him to display some evidence of friendship, which its own irregularity shall make great? This I know, that I meant his punishment not alone to be a cure for his daily and habitual *pride*, but the direct consequence and appropriate punishment of a particular act of pride.

If you do not understand it so, it is my fault in not explaining my meaning.

I have not seen Coleridge since, and scarcely expect to see him,—perhaps he has been at Cambridge.

Need I turn over to blot a fresh clean half-sheet, merely to say, what I hope you are sure of without my repeating it, that I would have you consider me, dear Manning,

Your sincere friend,
C. Lamb.

BOOK II.—1800-1809

SOME CHARTLESS YEARS; AND A STRAIGHT COURSE

CHAPTER I

FROM POETRY TO LAMPOONING AND NEWSPAPER JEST

JANUARY 1800—DECEMBER 1801

LIII. TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Jan. 2nd, 1800.

Dear Coleridge,—Now I write, I cannot miss this opportunity of acknowledging the obligations myself, and the readers in general of that luminous paper, the *Morning Post*, are under to you for the very novel and exquisite manner in which you combined political with grammatical science in your yesterday's dissertation on Mr Wyndham's unhappy composition. It must have been the death-blow to that ministry. I expect Pitt and Grenville to resign. More especially the delicate and Cottrellian grace with which you officiated, with a ferula for a white wand, as gentleman usher to the word "also," which it seems did not know its place.

I expect Manning of Cambridge in town to-night. Will you fulfil your promise of meeting him at my house? He is a man of a thousand. Give me a line to say what day, whether Saturday, Sunday, Monday, &c., and if Sara and the Philosopher can come. I am afraid if I did not at intervals call upon you, I should *never see you*. But I forget, the affairs of the nation engross your time and your mind.

Farewell. C L.

LIV. TO THOMAS MANNING

1800.

Dear Manning,—Olivia is a good girl, and if you turn to my letter you will find that this very plea you set up to vindicate Lloyd, I had made use of as a reason why he should never have employed Olivia to make a copy of such a letter!—a letter I could not have sent to my Enemy's B——, if she had thought proper to seek me in the way of marriage. But you see it in one view, I in another. Rest you merry in your opinion! Opinion is a species of property; and though I am always desirous to share with my friend to a certain extent, I shall ever like to keep some tenets, and some property, properly my own. Some day, Manning, when we meet, substituting Corydon and fair Amaryllis, for Charles Lloyd and Mary Hayes, we will discuss together this question of moral feeling, "In what cases, and how far, sincerity is a virtue?" I do not mean Truth, a good Olivia-like creature, God bless her, who, meaning no offence, is always ready to give an answer when she is asked why she did so and so; but a certain forward-talking half-brother of hers, Sincerity, that amphibious gentleman, who is so ready to perk up his obnoxious sentiments unasked into your notice, as Midas would his ears into your face, uncalled for. But I despair of doing any thing by a letter in the way of explaining or coming to explanations. A good wish, or a pun, or a piece of secret history, may be well enough that way conveyed; nay, it has been known, that intelligence of a turkey hath been conveyed by that medium without much ambiguity. Godwin I am a good deal pleased with. He is a very well-behaved, decent man; nothing very brilliant about him or imposing, as you may suppose; quite another guess sort of gentleman from what your Anti-jacobin Christians imagine him. I was well pleased to find he has

neither horns nor claws; quite a tame creature, I assure you: a middle-sized man, both in stature and in understanding; whereas, from his noisy fame, you would expect to find a Briareus Centimanus, or a Tityus tall enough to pull Jupiter from his heavens.

I begin to think you atheists not quite so tall a species! Coleridge inquires after you pretty often. I wish to be the Pandar to bring you together again once before I die. When we die, you and I must part; the sheep, you know, take the right-hand sign-post, and the goats the left. Stript of its allegory, you must know the sheep are—I, the Apostles, and the martyrs, and the Popes, and Bishop Taylor, and Bishop Horsley, and Coleridge, &c. &c. The goats are the atheists, and adulterers, and fornicators, and dumb dogs, and Godwin, and M——g, and that Thyestæan crew! Egad, how my saintship sickens at the idea! You shall have my play and the Falstaff's Letters in a day or two. I will write to Ll[oyd] by this day's Post.

Pray, is it a part of your sincerity to show my letters to Lloyd? for, really, gentlemen ought to explain their virtues upon a first acquaintance, to prevent mistakes.

God bless you, Manning. Take my trifling *as trifling*; and believe me, seriously and deeply,

Your well-wisher and friend,

C.L.

LV. TO THE SAME

[March 1, 1800.]

I hope by this time you are prepared to say, the "Falstaff's letters" are a bundle of the sharpest, queerest, profoundest humours, of any these juice-drained latter times have spawned. I should have advertised you, that the meaning is frequently hard to be got at; and so are the future guineas, that now

lie ripening and aurifying in the womb of some undiscovered Potosi; but dig, dig, dig, dig, Manning! I set to, with an unconquerable propulsion to write, with a lamentable want of what to write. My private goings on are orderly as the movements of the spheres, and stale as their music to angels' ears. Public affairs—except as they touch upon me, and so turn into private,—I cannot whip up my mind to feel any interest in. I grieve, indeed, that War, and Nature, and Mr Pitt, that hangs up in Lloyd's best parlour, should have conspired to call up three necessaries, simple commoners as our father's knew them, into the upper house of luxuries; bread, and beer, and coals, Manning. But as to France and Frenchmen, and the Abbé Sièyes and his constitutions, I cannot make these present times present to me. I read histories of the past, and I live in them; although, to abstract senses, they are far less momentous than the noises which keep Europe awake. I am reading *Burnet's History of his own Times*. Did you ever read that garrulous, pleasant history? He tells his story like an old man past political service, bragging to his sons on winter evenings of the part he took in public transactions, when his "old cap was new." Full of scandal, which all true history is. No palliatives; but all the stark wickedness, that actually gives the *momentum* to national actors. Quite the prattle of age, and outlived importance. Truth and sincerity staring out upon you perpetually in *alto relievo*. Himself a party man—he makes you a party man. None of the cursed philosophical Humeian indifference, so cold, and unnatural, and inhuman! None of the cursed Gibbonian fine writing, so fine and composite! None of Dr Robertson's periods with three members. None of Mr Roscoe's sage remarks, all so apposite, and coming in so clever, lest the reader should have had the trouble of drawing an inference. Burnet's

good old prattle I can bring present to my mind; I can make the revolution present to me: the French revolution, by a converse perversity in my nature, I fling as far *from* me. To quit this tiresome subject, and to relieve you from two or three dismal yawns, which I hear in spirit, I here conclude my more than commonly obtuse letter; dull, up to the dulness of a Dutch commentator on Shakspeare.

My love to Lloyd and to Sophia.

C. L.

LVI. TO THE SAME

March 17th, 1800.

Dear Manning,—I am living in a continuous feast. Coleridge has been with me now for nigh three weeks, and the more I see of him in the quotidian undress and relaxation of his mind, the more cause I see to love him, and believe him a *very good man*, and all those foolish impressions to the contrary fly off like morning slumbers. He is engaged in translations, which I hope will keep him this month to come. He is uncommonly kind and friendly to me. He ferrets me day and night to *do something*. He tends me, amidst all his own worrying and heart-oppressing occupations, as a gardener tends his young *tulip*. Marry come up; what a pretty similitude, and how like your humble servant! He has lugged me to the brink of engaging to a newspaper, and has suggested to me, for a first plan, the forgery of a supposed manuscript of Burton, the anatomist of melancholy. I have even written the introductory letter; and, if I can pick up a few guineas this way, I feel they will be most *refreshing*, bread being so dear. If I go on with it, I will apprise you of it, as you may like to see my things! and the *tulip*, of all flowers, loves to be admired most.

Pray pardon me, if my letters do not come very

thick. I am so taken up with one thing or other, that I cannot pick out (I will not say time, but) fitting times to write to you. My dear love to Lloyd and Sophia, and pray split this thin letter into three parts, and present them with the *two biggest* in my name.

They are my oldest friends; but, ever the new friend driveth out the old, as the ballad sings! God bless you all three! I would hear from Ll[oyd] if I could.

Flour has just fallen nine shillings a sack: we shall be all too rich.

Tell Charles I have seen his mamma, and have almost fallen in love with *her*, since I mayn't with Olivia. She is so fine and graceful, a complete matron-lady-quaker. She has given me two little books. Olivia grows a charming girl—full of feeling, and thinner than she was; but I have not time to fall in love.

Mary presents her *general compliments*. She keeps in fine health.

Huzza boys! and down with the Atheists!

LVII. TO ROBERT LLOYD

[April 23; ? 1800.]

My dear Robert,—I acknowledge I have been sadly remiss of late. If I descend to any excuse, (and all excuses, that come short of a direct denial of a charge, are poor creatures at best,) it must be taken from my state of mind for some time past, which has been stupid rather, and unfilled with any object, than occupied, as you may imagine, with any favourite idea to the exclusion of friend Robert. You, who are subject to all the varieties of the mind, will give me credit in this.

I am sadly sorry that you are relapsing into your old complaining strain. I wish I could adapt my consolation to your disease, but alas, I have none to offer

which your own mind, and the suggestions of books, cannot better supply. Are you the first whose situation hath not been exactly squar'd to his ideas? or rather, will you find me that man, who does not complain of the one thing wanting? that thing obtained, another wish will start up, while this eternal craving of the mind keeps up its eternal hunger. No feast that my palate knows of will satisfy that hunger, till we come to drink the new wine (whatever it be) in the kingdom of the father. See what trifles disquiet us. You are unhappy because your Parents expect you to attend meetings. I don't know much of quaker's meetings, but I believe I may moderately reckon them to take up the space of six hours in the week: Six hours to please your parents—and that time not absolutely lost. Your mind remains; you may think, and plan, remember, and foresee, and do all human acts of mind sitting as well as walking. You are quiet at meeting; one likes to be so sometimes. You may advantageously crowd your day's devotions into that space: nothing you see or hear there can be unfavorable to it: you are for that time at least exempt from the counting house, and your parents cannot chide you there. Surely at so small an expence you cannot grudge to observe the 5th Commandment. I decidedly consider your refusal as a breach of that God-descended precept — Honour and observe thy parents in all lawful things. Silent worship cannot be *Unlawful*. There is no Idolatry, no invocation of saints, no bowing before the consecrated wafer, in all this—nothing which a wise man would refuse, or a good man fear to do. What is it? Sitting a few hours in a week with certain good people, who call *that* worship. You subscribe to no articles. If your mind wanders, it is no crime in you, who do not give credit to these infusions of the spirit. They sit in a temple, you sit as in a room adjoining—only do not disturb their pious work with gabbling, nor your own

Robert Lloyd, from a silhouette
in the possession of F. H. Steeds, Esq.

necessary peace with heart burnings at your not-ill-meaning parents, nor a silly contempt of the work which is going on before you. I know that if my parents were to live again, I would do more things to please them, than merely sitting still six hours in a week. Perhaps I enlarge too much on this affair, but indeed your objection seems to me ridiculous, and involving in it a principle of frivolous and vexatious resistance.

You have often borne with my freedoms, bear with me once more in this. If I did not love you, I should not trouble myself whether you went to meeting or not — whether you conformd or not to the will of your father.

I am now called off to dinner before one o'clock. Being a holyday, we dine early, for Mary and me to have a long walk afterwards.

My kindest remembrance to Charles. God give him all joy and quiet—

Mary sends her Love

C. L.

LVIII. TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

May 12th, 1800.

My dear Coleridge,—I don't know why I write, except from the propensity which misery has to tell her griefs. Hetty died on Friday night, about eleven o'clock, after eight days' illness. Mary, in consequence of fatigue and anxiety, is fallen ill again, and I was obliged to remove her yesterday. I am left alone in a house with nothing but Hetty's dead body to keep me company. To-morrow I bury her, and then I shall be quite alone, with nothing but a cat, to remind me that the house has been full of living beings like myself. My heart is quite sunk, and I don't know where to look for relief. Mary will get better again, but her constantly being liable to such relapses is dreadful; nor is it the least of our evils

that her case and all our story is so well known around us. We are in a manner *marked.* Excuse my troubling you, but I have nobody by me to speak to me. I slept out last night, not being able to endure the change and the stillness; but I did not sleep well, and I must come back to my own bed. I am going to try and get a friend to come and be with me to-morrow. I am completely shipwrecked. My head is quite bad. I almost wish that Mary were dead. God bless you! Love to Sara and Hartley.—*Monday.* C. Lamb.

LIX. TO THE SAME

Summer of 1800.

I send you, in this parcel, my play, which I beg you to present in my name, with my respect and love, to Wordsworth and his sister. You blame us for giving your direction to Miss Wesley. The woman has been ten times after us about it, and we gave it her at last, under the idea that no further harm would ensue; but she would *once* write to you, and you would bite your lips and forget to answer it, and so it would end. You read us a dismal homily upon "Realities." We know, quite as well as you do, what are shadows and what are realities. You, for instance, when you are over your fourth or fifth jorum, chirping about old school occurrences, are the best of realities. Shadows are cold, thin things, that have no warmth or grasp in them. Miss Wesley and her friend, and a tribe of authoresses that come after you here daily, and, in defect of you, hive and cluster upon us, are the shadows. You encouraged that mopsey, Miss Wesley, to dance after you, in the hope of having her nonsense put into a nonsensical Anthology. We have pretty well shaken her off by that simple expedient of referring her to you; but there are more burs in the wind. I came

home t'other day from business, hungry as a hunter, to dinner, with nothing, I am sure, of the author but *hunger* about me; and whom found I closeted with Mary but a friend of this Miss Wesley, one Miss Benjay or Benje; I don't know how she spells her name. I just came in time enough, I believe, luckily to prevent them from exchanging vows of eternal friendship. It seems she is one of your authoresses, that you first foster, and then upbraid us with. But I forgive you. "The rogue has given me potions to make me love him." Well; go she would not, nor step a step over our threshold, till we had promised to come and drink tea with her next night. I had never seen her before, and could not tell who the devil it was that was so familiar. We went, however, not to be impolite. Her lodgings are up two pair of stairs in East Street. Tea and coffee, and macaroons—a kind of cake—much love. We sat down. Presently Miss Benjay broke the silence, by declaring herself quite of a different opinion from *D'Israeli*, who supposes the differences of human intellect to be the mere effect of organisation. She begged to know my opinion. I attempted to carry it off with a pun upon organ, but that went off very flat. She immediately conceived a very low opinion of my metaphysics; and, turning round to Mary, put some question to her in French,—possibly having heard that neither Mary nor I understood French. The explanation that took place occasioned some embarrassment and much wondering. She then fell into an insulting conversation about the comparative genius and merits of all modern languages, and concluded with asserting that the Saxon was esteemed the purest dialect in Germany. From thence she passed into the subject of poetry; where I, who had hitherto sat mute, and a hearer only, humbly hoped I might now put in a word to some advantage, seeing that it was my own trade in

a manner. But I was stopped by a round assertion, that no good poetry had appeared since Dr Johnson's time. It seems the Doctor has suppressed many hopeful genuises that way, by the severity of his critical strictures in his *Lives of the Poets*. I here ventured to question the fact, and was beginning to appeal to *names*, but I was assured "it was certainly the case." Then we discussed Miss More's book on education, which I had never read. It seems Dr Gregory, another of Miss Benjay's friends, has found fault with one of Miss More's metaphors. Miss More has been at some pains to vindicate herself,—in the opinion of Miss Benjay, not without success. It seems the Doctor is invariably against the use of broken or mixed metaphor, which he reprobates, against the authority of Shakspeare himself. We next discussed the question, whether Pope was a poet? I find Dr Gregory is of opinion he was not, though Miss Seward does not at all concur with him in this. We then sat upon the comparative merits of the ten translations of *Pizarro*, and Miss Benjay or Benje advised Mary to take two of them home; (she thought it might afford her some pleasure to compare them *verbatim*;) which we declined. It being now nine o'clock, wine and macaroons were again served round, and we parted, with a promise to go again next week, and meet the Miss Porters, who, it seems, have heard much of Mr Coleridge, and wish to meet *us*, because we are *his* friends. I have been preparing for the occasion. I crowd cotton in my ears. I read all the reviews and magazines of the past month, against the dreadful meeting, and I hope by these means to cut a tolerable second-rate figure.

Pray let us have no more complaints about shadows. We are in a fair way, *through you*, to surfeit sick upon them.

Our loves and respects to your host and hostess. Our dearest love to Coleridge.

Take no thought about your proof sheets; they shall be done as if Woodfall himself did them. Pray send us word of Mrs Coleridge and little David Hartley, your little reality.

Farewell, dear Substance. Take no umbrage at any thing I have written. C. LAMB, *Umbra*

Land of Shadows,
Shadow Month the 16th or 17th, 1800.

Coleridge, I find loose among your papers a copy of *Christabel*. It wants about thirty lines; you will very much oblige me by sending me the beginning as far as that line,—

"And the spring comes slowly up this way;"

and the intermediate lines between—

"The lady leaps up suddenly,
The lovely Lady Christabel;"

and the lines,—

"She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak."

The trouble to you *will be small*, and the benefit to us *very great*. A pretty antithesis! A figure in speech I much applaud.

Godwin has called upon us. He spent one evening here: was very friendly: kept us up till midnight, drank punch, and talked about you. He seems above all men, mortified at your going away. Suppose you were to write to that good-natured heathen: "Or is he a *shadow*?"

If I do not *write*, impute it to the long postage, of which you have so much cause to complain. I have scribbled over a *queer letter*, as I find by perusal, but it means no mischief.

I am, and will be, yours ever, in sober sadness,

C. L.

Write your *German* as plain as sunshine, for that must correct itself. You know I am *homo unius linguæ*: in English—illiterate, a dunce, a ninny.

LX. TO THOMAS MANNING

1800.

Dear Manning,—I feel myself unable to thank you sufficiently for your kind letter. It was doubly acceptable to me, both for the choice poetry and the kind honest prose which it contained. It was just such a letter as I should have expected from Manning.

I am in much better spirits than when I wrote last. I have had a very eligible offer to lodge with a friend in town. He will have rooms to let at Midsummer; by which time I hope my sister will be well enough to join me. It is a great object to me to live in town, where we shall be much more *private*, and to quit a house and a neighbourhood where poor Mary's disorder, so frequently recurring, has made us a sort of marked people. We can be nowhere private except in the midst of London. We shall be in a family where we visit very frequently; only my landlord and I have not yet come to a conclusion. He has a partner to consult. I am still on the tremble, for I do not know where we could go into lodgings that would not be, in many respects, highly exceptionable. Only God send Mary well again, and I hope all will be well! The prospect, such as it is, has made me quite happy. I have just time to tell you of it, as I know it will give you pleasure.—Farewell.

C. Lamb.

LXI. TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

June 22, 1800.

By some fatality, unusual with me, I have mislaid the list of books which you want. Can you, from memory, easily supply me with another?

I confess to Statius, and I detained him wilfully, out of a reverent regard to your style. Statius, they tell me, is turgid. As to that other Latin book, since you know neither its name nor subject, your wants (I crave leave to apprehend) cannot be very urgent. Meanwhile, dream that it is one of the lost Decades of Livy.

Your partiality to me has led you to form an erroneous opinion as to the measure of delight you suppose me to take in obliging. Pray be careful that it spread no further. 'Tis one of those heresies that is very pregnant. Pray rest more satisfied with the portion of learning which you have got, and disturb my peaceful ignorance as little as possible with such sort of commissions.

Did you never observe an appearance well known by the name of the man in the moon? Some scandalous old maids have set on foot a report, that it is Endymion.

Your theory about the first awkward step a man makes being the consequence of learning to dance, is not universal. We have known many youths bred up at Christ's, who never learned to dance, yet the world imputes to them no very graceful motions. I remember there was little Hudson, the immortal precentor of St Paul's, to teach us our quavers; but, to the best of my recollection, there was no master of motions when we were at Christ's.

Farewell, in haste.

C. L.

LXII. TO ROBERT LLOYD

[July 22, 1800.]

Dear Robert,—My mind has been so barren and idle of late, that I have done nothing. I have received many a summons from you, and have repeatedly sat down to write, and broke off from despair of sending

you any thing worthy your acceptance. I have had such a deadness about me. Man delights not me, nor woman neither. I impute it in part or altogether to the stupefying effect which continued fine weather has upon me. I want some rains, or even snow and intense cold winter nights, to bind me to my habitation, and make me value it as a home—a sacred character which it has not attained with me hitherto. I cannot read or write when the sun shines. I can only walk. . . . . .

I must tell you, that since I wrote last I have been two days at Oxford, on a visit (long put off) to Gutch's family (my Landlord) I was much gratifyed with the Colleges and Libraries, and what else of Oxford I could see in so short a time. In the All Soul's Library is a fine head of Bishop Taylor, which was one great inducement to my Oxford visit. In the Bodleian are many Portraits of illustrious Dead, the only species of painting I value at a farthing. But an indubitable good Portrait of a great man is worth a pilgrimage to go and see. Gutch's family is a very fine one, consisting of well grown sons and daughters, and all likely and well favor'd. What is called a Happy family. That is, according to my interpretation, a numerous assemblage of young men and women, all fond of each other to a certain degree, and all happy together, but where the very number forbids any two of them to get close enough to each other to share secrets and *be friends*. That close intercourse can only exist, (commonly, I think) in a family of two or three. I do not envy large families. The fraternal affection by diffusion and multi-participation is ordinarily thin and weak. They don't get near enough to each other. I expected to have an account of Sophia's being brought to bed before this time. But I remain in confidence that you will send me the earliest news. I hope it will be happy. Coleridge is settled at Keswick, so that the probability is that he

will be once again united with your Brother. Such men as he and Wordsworth would exclude solitude in the Hebrides or Thule.

Pray have you seen the new Edition of Burns including his posthumous works?—I want very much to get a sight of it, but cannot afford to buy it. My Oxford Journey, though very moderate, having pared away all superfluities.

Will you accept of this short Letter, accompanied with professions of deepest regard to you.

Yours unalterably,

C. Lamb.

LXIII. TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

1800.

Dear Coleridge,—Soon after I wrote to you last, an offer was made me by Gutch (you must remember him, at Christ's; you saw him, slightly, one day with Thomson at our house), to come and lodge with him, at his house in Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane. This was a very comfortable offer to me, the rooms being at a reasonable rent, and including the use of an old servant, besides being infinitely preferable to ordinary lodgings *in our case*, as you must perceive. As Gutch knew all our story and the perpetual liability to a recurrence in my sister's disorder, probably to the end of her life, I certainly think the offer very generous and very friendly. I have got three rooms (including servant) under £34 a year. Here I soon found myself at home; and here, in six weeks after, Mary was well enough to join me. So we are once more settled. I am afraid we are not placed out of the reach of future interruptions. But I am determined to take what snatches of pleasure we can between the acts of our distressful drama. . . . I have passed two days at Oxford, on a visit which I have long put off, to Gutch's family. The

sight of the Bodleian Library, and, above all, a fine bust of Bishop Taylor, at All Souls', were particularly gratifying to me. Unluckily, it was not a family where I could take Mary with me, and I am afraid there is something of dishonesty in any pleasures I take without *her*. She never goes anywhere. I do not know what I can add to this letter. I hope you are better by this time; and I desire to be affectionately remembered to Sara and Hartley.

I expected before this to have had tidings of another little philosopher. Lloyd's wife is on the point of favouring the world.

Have you seen the new edition of Burns? his posthumous works and letters? I have only been able to procure the first volume, which contains his life—very confusedly and badly written, and interspersed with dull pathological and *medical* discussions. It is written by a Dr Currie. Do you know the well-meaning doctor? Alas, *ne sutor ultra crepidam*!

I hope to hear again from you very soon. Godwin is gone to Ireland on a visit to Grattan. Before he went I passed much time with him, and he has showed me particular attentions: N.B. A thing I much like. Your books are all safe: only I have not thought it necessary to fetch away your last batch, which I understand are at Johnson's, the bookseller, who has got quite as much room, and will take as much care of them as myself; and you can send for them immediately from him.

I wish you would advert to a letter I sent you at Grassmere about *Christabel*, and comply with my request contained therein.

Love to all friends round Skiddaw.

C. Lamb.

LXIV. TO THE SAME

Aug. 6th, 1800.

Dear Coleridge,—I have taken to-day, and delivered to L. & Co., *Imprimis*: your books, viz., three ponderous German dictionaries, one volume (I can find no more) of German and French ditto, sundry other German books unbound, as you left them, *Percy's Ancient Poetry*, and one volume of *Anderson's Poets*. I specify them, that you may not lose any. *Secundo*: a dressing gown (value, fivepence) in which you used to sit and look like a conjuror, when you were translating Wallenstein. A case of two razors, and a shaving-box and strap. This it has cost me a severe struggle to part with. They are in a brown-paper parcel, which also contains sundry papers and poems, sermons, *some few Epic* Poems,—one about Cain and Abel, which came from Poole, &c., &c., and also your tragedy; with one or two small German books, and that drama in which Got-fader performs. *Tertio*: a small oblong box containing *all your letters*, collected from all your waste papers, and which fill the said little box. All other waste papers, which I judged worth sending, are in the paper parcel aforesaid. But you will find *all* your letters in the box by themselves. Thus have I discharged my conscience and my lumber-room of all your property, save and except a folio entitled *Tyrrell's Bibliotheca Politica*, which you used to learn your politics out of when you wrote for the *Post*, *mutatis mutandis*, *i.e.*, applying past inferences to modern *data*. I retain that, because I am sensible I am very deficient in the politics myself; and I have torn up (don't be angry, waste paper has risen forty per cent., and I can't afford to buy it) all *Buonaparte's Letters*, *Arthur Young's Treatise on Corn*, and one or two more light-armed infantry, which I thought better suited the flippancy of London discussion than the dignity of Keswick thinking. Mary says you will be

in a passion about them, when you come to miss them; but you must study philosophy. Read *Albertus Magnus de Chartis Amissis* five times over after phlebotomising, 'tis Burton's recipe—and then be angry with an absent friend if you can.

Sara is obscure. Am I to understand by her letter, that she sends a *kiss* to Eliza Buckingham? Pray tell your wife that a note of interrogation on the superscription of a letter is highly ungrammatical: she proposes writing my name *Lamb*? Lamb*e* is quite enough. I have had the Anthology, and like only one thing in it, *Lewti*; but of that the last stanza is detestable, the rest most exquisite: the epithet *enviable* would dash the finest poem. For God's sake (I never was more serious) don't make me ridiculous any more by terming me gentle-hearted in print, or do it in better verses. It did well enough five years ago when I came to see you, and was moral coxcomb enough at the time you wrote the lines, to feed upon such epithets; but, besides that, the meaning of "gentle" is equivocal at best, and almost always means poor-spirited; the very quality of gentleness is abhorrent to such vile trumpetings. My *sentiment* is long since vanished. I hope my *virtues* have done *sucking*. I can scarce think but you meant it in joke. I hope you did, for I should be ashamed to believe that you could think to gratify me by such praise, fit only to be a cordial to some green-sick sonneteer.

I have hit off the following in imitation of old English poetry, which, I imagine, I am a dab at. The measure is unmeasurable; but it most resembles that beautiful ballad, the "Old and Young Courtier"; and in its features of taking the extremes of two situations for just parallel, it resembles the old poetry certainly. If I could but stretch out the circumstances to twelve more verses, *i.e.*, if I had as much genius as the writer of that old song, I think it would be excellent. It was to follow an imitation of Burton in prose,

which you have not seen. But fate "and wisest Stewart" say No.

I can send you 200 pens and six quires of paper *immediately*, if they will answer the carriage by coach. It would be foolish to pack 'em up *cum multis libris et cæteris*; they would all spoil. I only wait your commands to coach them. I would pay five-and-forty thousand carriages to read W.'s tragedy, of which I have heard so much and seen so little—only what I saw at Stowey. Pray give me an order in writing on Longman for *Lyrical Ballads*. I have the first volume, and, truth to tell, six shillings is a broad shot. I cram all I can in, to save a multiplying of letters,—those pretty comets with swinging tails.

I'll just crowd in, God bless you! C. Lamb.

Wednesday night.

LXV. TO THOMAS MANNING

[August 9, 1800.]

Dear Manning,—I suppose you have heard of Sophia Lloyd's good fortune, and paid the customary compliments to the parents. Heaven keep the newborn infant from star blasting and moon blasting, from epilepsy, marasmus, and the devil! May he live to see many days, and they good ones; some friends, and they *pretty regular correspondents*! with as much wit and wisdom as will eat their bread and cheese together under a poor roof without quarrelling! as much goodness as will earn heaven. Here I must leave off, my benedictory powers failing me.

And now, when shall I catch a glimpse of your honest face-to-face countenance again?—your fine *dogmatical sceptical* face by punch-light? Oh! one glimpse of the human face, and shake of the human hand, is better than whole reams of this cold, thin correspondence; yea, of more worth than all the letters

that have sweated the fingers of sensibility, from Madame Sévigné and Balzac to Sterne and Shenstone.

Coleridge is settled with his wife and the young philosopher at Keswick, with the Wordsworths. They have contrived to spawn a new volume of lyrical ballads, which is to see the light in about a month, and causes no little excitement in the *literary world*. George Dyer too, that good-natured heathen, is more than nine months gone with his twin volumes of ode, pastoral, sonnet, elegy, Spenserian, Horatian, Akensidish, and Masonic verse. Clio prosper the birth! it will be twelve shillings out of somebody's pocket. I find he means to exclude "personal satire," so it appears by his truly original advertisement. Well, God put it into the hearts of the English gentry to come in shoals and subscribe to his poems, for He never put a kinder heart into flesh of man than George Dyer's!

Now farewell, for dinner is at hand. C. L.

LXVI. TO THE SAME

August 11th, 1800.

My dear Fellow, (N.B. mighty familiar of late!) for me to come to Cambridge now is one of heaven's impossibilities. Metaphysicians tell us, even it can work nothing which implies a contradiction. I can explain this by telling you that I am engaged to do double duty (this hot weather!) for a man who has taken advantage of this very weather to go and cool himself in "green retreats" all the month of August.

But for you to come to London instead!—muse upon it, revolve it, cast it about in your mind. I have a bed at your command. You shall drink rum, brandy, gin, aqua-vitæ, usquebaugh, or whiskey a' nights; and for the after-dinner trick, I have eight bottles of genuine port, which, mathematically

divided, gives 1¼ for every day you stay, provided you stay a week. Hear John Milton sing,

> "Let Euclid rest and Archimedes pause.'
> *Twenty-first Sonnet.*

And elsewhere,—

> "What neat repast shall feast us, light and choice,
> Of Attic taste, with wine, whence we may rise
> To hear the lute well touch'd, or artful voice
> Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air?"

Indeed the poets are full of this pleasing morality,—

> "Veni cito, Domine Manning!"

Think upon it. Excuse the paper; it is all I have.

C. Lamb.

LXVII. TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Thursday, Aug. 14, 1800.

My head is playing all the tunes in the world, ringing such peals! It has just finished the "Merry Christ Church Bells," and absolutely is beginning "Turn again Whittington," Buz, buz, buz, bum, bum, bum, wheeze, wheeze, wheeze, feu, feu, feu, tinky, tinky, tinky, *cr'annch*. I shall certainly come to be damned at last. I have been getting drunk two days running, and I find my moral sense in the last stage of consumption, my religion burning blue and faint as the tops of burning bricks. Hell gapes and the Devil's great guts cry "cupboard" for me. In the midst of these infernal larums, conscience (and be damned to her) barking and yelping as loud as any of them. I have sat down to read over again your satire upon me in the *Anthology*, and I think I do begin to spy out something like beauty and design in it. I perfectly accede to all your alterations, and only desire that you had cut deeper, when your hand was in.

In sober truth, I cannot see any great truth in the little dialogue called "Blenheim." It is rather novel

and pretty, but the thought is very obvious and is but poor prattle, a thing of easy imitation. *Pauper vult videri et est.*

In the next edition of the *Anthology* (which Phœbus avert, and those nine other wandering maids also!) please to blot out "gentle-hearted," and substitute "drunken dog, ragged head, seld-shaven, odd-eyed, stuttering," or any other epithet which truly and properly belongs to the gentleman in question. And for Charles read Tom, or Bob, or Richard for mere delicacy. Hang you, I was beginning to forgive you, and believe in earnest that the lugging in of my proper name was purely unintentional on your part, when looking back for further conviction, stares me in the face, "Charles Lamb of the *India House*." *Now* I am convinced it was all done in malice, heaped sack-upon-sack, congregated, studied malice. You dog! your 141st page shall not save you. I own I was just ready to acknowledge that there is a something not unlike good poetry in that page, if you had not run into the unintelligible abstraction-fit about the manner of the Deity's making spirits perceive his presence. No created thing alive can receive any honour from such thin show-box attributes. By the by, where did you pick up that scandalous piece of private history about the angel and the Duchess of Devonshire? If it is a fiction of your own, why truly it was a very modest one *for you*. Now I do affirm, that "Lewti" is a very beautiful poem. I *was* in earnest when I praised it. It describes a silly species of one not the wisest of passions. *Therefore* it cannot deeply affect a disenthralled mind. But such imagery, such novelty, such delicacy, and such versification never got into an *Anthology* before. I am only sorry that the cause of all the passionate complaint is not greater than the trifling circumstance of Lewti being out of temper one day. "Gaulberto" certainly has considerable originality, but sadly wants finishing. It

is, as it is, one of the very best in the book. Next to "Lewti" I like the "Raven," which has a good deal of humour. I was pleased to see it again, for you once sent it me, and I have lost the letter which contained it. Now I am on the subject of Anthologies, I must say I am sorry the old pastoral way has fallen into disrepute. The gentry which now indite sonnets are certainly the legitimate descendants of the ancient shepherds. The same simpering face of description, the old family face, is visibly continued in the line. Some of their ancestors' labours are yet to be found in Allan Ramsay's and Jacob Tonson's Miscellanies. But miscellanies decaying, and the old pastoral way dying of mere want, their successors (driven from their paternal acres) now-a-days settle and lie upon Magazines and Anthologies. This race of men are uncommonly addicted to superstition. Some of them are idolators, and worship the moon. Others deify qualities, as Love, Friendship, Sensibility; or bare accidents, as Solitude. Grief and Melancholy have their respective altars and temples among them, as the heathens builded theirs to Mors, Febris, Pallor, Oris. They all agree in ascribing a peculiar sanctity to the number 14. One of their own legislators affirmeth, that whatever exceeds that number "encroacheth upon the province of the elegy"—*vice versa*, whatever "cometh short of that number abutteth upon the premises of the epigram." I have been able to discover but few *images* in their temples, which like the caves of Delphos of old, are famous for giving *echoes*. They impute a religious importance to the letter O, whether because by its roundness it is thought to typify the moon, their principal goddess, or for its analogies to their own labours, all ending where they began; or for whatever other high and mystical reference, I have never been able to discover, but I observe they never begin their invocations to their gods without it, except indeed one insignificant

sect among them, who use the Doric A, pronounced like Ah! broad, instead. These boast to have restored the old Dorian mood.

Now I am on the subject of poetry, I must announce to you, who doubtless in your remote part of the island have not heard tidings of so great a blessing, that George Dyer hath prepared two ponderous volumes full of poetry and criticism. They impend over the town, and are threatened to fall in the Winter. The first volume contains every sort of poetry, except personal satire, which George, in his truly original prospectus, renounceth for ever, whimsically foisting the intention in between the price of his book and the proposed number of subscribers. (If I can, I will get you a copy of his *handbill.*) He has tried his *vein* in every species besides—the Spenserian, Thomsonian, Masonic, and Akensidish more especially. The second volume is all criticism; wherein he demonstrates to the entire satisfaction of the literary world, in a way that must silence all reply for ever, that the Pastoral was introduced by Theocritus, and polished by Virgil and Pope; that Gray and Mason (who always hunt in couples in George's brain) have a good deal of poetical fire and true lyric genius; that Cowley was ruined by excess of wit (a warning to all moderns); that Charles Lloyd, Charles Lamb, and William Wordsworth, in later days, have struck the true chords of poesy. O George, George! with a head uniformly wrong, and a heart uniformly right, that I had power and might equal to my wishes: then I would call the gentry of thy native island, and they should come in troops, flocking at the sound of thy prospectus trumpet, and crowding who shall be first to stand in thy list of subscribers! I can only put twelve shillings into thy pocket (which, I will answer for them, will not stick there long), out of a pocket almost as bare as thine. Is it not a pity so much fine writing should be erased?

But, to tell the truth, I began to scent that I was getting into that sort of style which Longinus and Dionysius Halicarnassus aptly calls affective.

But I am suffering from the combined effects of two days' drunkenness, and at such times it is not very easy to think and express in a natural series. The only useful effect of this letter is to apprize you that on Saturday I shall transmit the pens by the same coach I sent the parcel, so enquire them out—you had better write to Godwin here directing your letter to be forwarded to him. I don't know his address, you know your letter must at any rate come to London first.

C. L.

LXVIII. TO THOMAS MANNING

1800.

Dear Manning,—I am going to ask a favour of you, and am at a loss how to do it in the most delicate manner. For this purpose I have been looking into Pliny's Letters, who is noted to have had the best grace in begging of all the ancients, (I read him in the elegant translation of Mr Melmoth,) but not finding any case there exactly similar with mine, I am constrained to beg in my own barbarian way. To come to the point then, and hasten into the middle of things: have you a copy of your Algebra to give away? I do not ask it for myself; I have too much reverence for the Black Arts ever to approach thy circle, illustrious Trismegist! But that worthy man, and excellent Poet, George Dyer, made me a visit yesternight, on purpose to borrow one; supposing, rationally enough, I must say, that you had made me a present of one before this; the omission of which I take to have proceeded only from negligence; but it is a fault. I could lend him no assistance. You must know he is just now diverted from the pursuit of the Bell Letters by a paradox, which he has heard his friend Frend, (that learned

mathematician) maintain, that the negative quantities of mathematicians were *meræ nugæ*, things scarcely *in rerum natura*, and smacking too much of mystery for gentlemen of Mr Frend's clear Unitarian capacity. However, the dispute once set a-going, has seized violently on George's pericranick; and it is necessary for his health that he should speedily come to a resolution of his doubts. He goes about teasing his friends with his new mathematics; he even frantically talks of purchasing Manning's Algebra, which shows him far gone; for, to my knowledge, he has not been master of seven shillings a good time. George's pockets and ——'s brains are two things in nature which do not abhor a vacuum. . . . Now, if you could step in, in this trembling suspense of his reason, and he should find on Saturday morning, lying for him at the Porter's Lodge, Clifford's Inn, (his safest address,) Manning's Algebra, with a neat manuscription in the blank leaf, running thus "FROM THE AUTHOR," it might save his wits, and restore the unhappy author to those studies of poetry and criticism which are at present suspended, to the infinite regret of the whole literary world. N.B — Dirty backs, smeared leaves, and dogs' ears, will be rather a recommendation than otherwise. N.B.—He must have the book as soon as possible, or nothing can withhold him from madly purchasing the book on tick. . . . Then shall we see him sweetly restored to the chair of Longinus—to dictate in smooth and modest phrase the laws of verse; to prove that Theocritus first introduced the Pastoral, and Virgil and Pope brought it to its perfection; that Gray and Mason (who always hunt in couples in George's brain) have shown a great deal of poetical fire in their lyric poetry; that Aristotle's rules are not to be servilely followed, which George has shown to have imposed great shackles upon modern genius. His poems, I find, are to consist of two vols.—reasonable

octavo; and a third book will exclusively contain criticisms, in which he asserts he has gone *pretty deeply* into the laws of blank verse and rhyme—epic poetry, dramatic and pastoral ditto—all which is to come out before Christmas. But above all, he has *touched* most *deeply* upon the Drama, comparing the English with the modern German stage, their merits and defects. Apprehending that his *studies* (not to mention his *turn*, which I take to be chiefly towards the lyrical poetry) hardly qualified him for these disquisitions, I modestly inquired what plays he had read? I found by George's reply that he *had* read Shakspeare, but that was a good while since: he calls him a great but irregular genius, which I think to be an original and just remark. Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, Ben Jonson, Shirley, Marlowe, Ford, and the worthies of Dodsley's Collection—he confessed he had read none of them, but professed his *intention* of looking through them all, so as to be able to *touch* upon them in his book. So Shakspeare, Otway, and I believe Rowe, to whom he was naturally directed by Johnson's Lives, and these not read lately, are to stand him in stead of a general knowledge of the subject. God bless his dear absurd head!

By the by, did I not write you a letter with something about an invitation in it? But let that pass; I suppose it is not agreeable.

N.B.—It would not be amiss if you were to accompany your *present* with a dissertation on negative quantities. C. L.

LXIX. TO THE SAME

1800.

George Dyer is an Archimedes, and an Archimagus, and a Tycho Brahé, and a Corpernicus; and thou art the darling of the Nine, and midwife to their wandering babe also! We take tea with that learned poet and critic on Tuesday night, at half-

past five, in his neat library. The repast will be light and Attic, with criticism. If thou couldst contrive to wheel up thy dear carcass on the Monday, and after dining with us on tripe, calves' kidneys, or whatever else the Cornucopia of St Clare may be willing to pour out on the occasion, might we not adjourn together to the Heathen's—thou with thy Black Backs, and I with some innocent volume of the Bell Letters, Shenstone, or the like: it would make him wash his old flannel gown (that has not been washed to my knowledge since it has been *his* —Oh the long time!) with tears of joy. Thou shouldst settle his scruples and unravel his cobwebs, and sponge off the sad stuff that weighs upon his dear wounded pia mater. Thou shouldst restore light to his eyes; and him to his friends and the public. Parnassus should shower her civic crowns upon thee for saving the wits of a citizen! I thought I saw a lucid interval in George the other night; he broke in upon my studies just at tea-time, and brought with him Dr Anderson, an old gentleman who ties his breeches' knees with packthread, and boasts that he has been disappointed by ministers. The Doctor wanted to see *me*; for I being a Poet, he thought I might furnish him with a copy of verses to suit his *Agricultural Magazine*. The Doctor, in the course of the conversation, mentioned a poem called the "Epigoniad," by one Wilkie, an epic poem, in which there is not one tolerable good line all through, but every incident and speech borrowed from Homer. George had been sitting inattentive, seemingly, to what was going on—hatching of negative quantities—when, suddenly, the name of his old friend Homer stung his pericranicks, and, jumping up, he begged to know where he could meet with Wilkie's works. It was a curious fact, he said, that there should be such an epic poem and he not know of it; and he *must* get a copy of

it, as he was going to touch pretty deeply upon the subject of the Epic—and he was sure there must be some things good in a poem of 8000 lines! I was pleased with this transient return of his reason and recurrence to his old ways of thinking: it gave me great hopes of a recovery, which nothing but your book can completely insure. Pray come on Monday, if you *can*, and stay your own time. I have a good large room, with two beds in it, in the handsomest of which thou shalt repose a-nights, and dream of Spheroides. I hope you will understand by the nonsense of this letter that I am *not* melancholy at the thoughts of thy coming: I thought it necessary to add this, because you love *precision*. Take notice that our stay at Dyer's will not exceed eight o'clock; after which our pursuits will be our own. But indeed I think a little recreation among the Bell Letters and poetry will do you some service in the interval of severer studies. I hope we shall fully discuss with George Dyer what I have never yet heard done to my satisfaction, the reason of Dr Johnson's malevolent strictures on the higher species of the Ode.

LXX. TO THE SAME

August 22nd, 1800.

Dear Manning,—You needed not imagine any apology necessary. Your fine hare and fine birds (which are just now dangling by our kitchen blaze) discourse most eloquent music in your justification. You just nicked my palate. For with all due decorum and leave may it be spoken, my worship hath taken physic to-day, and being low and puling, requireth to be pampered. Foh! how beautiful and strong those buttered onions come to my nose! For you know we extract a divine spirit of gravy from those materials, which, duly compounded with a con-

sistence of bread and cream (y'clept bread-sauce), each to each giving double grace, do mutually illustrate and set off (as skilful gold foils to rare jewels) your partridge, pheasant, woodcock, snipe, teal, widgeon, and the other lesser daughters of the ark. My friendship, struggling with my carnal and fleshy prudence, (which suggests that a bird a man is the proper allotment in such cases,) yearneth sometimes to have thee here to pick a wing or so. I question if your Norfolk sauces match our London culinaric.

George Dyer has introduced me to the table of an agreeable old gentleman, Dr Anderson, who gives hot legs of mutton and grape pies at his sylvan lodge at Isleworth; where, in the middle of a street, he has shot up a wall most preposterously before his small dwelling, which, with the circumstance of his taking several panes of glass out of bed-room windows (for air), causeth his neighbours to speculate strangely on the state of the good man's pericranicks. Plainly, he lives under the reputation of being deranged. George does not mind this circumstance; he rather likes him the better for it. The Doctor, in his pursuits, joins agricultural to poetical science, and has set George's brains mad about the old Scotch writers, Barbour, Douglas's Æneid, Blind Harry, &c. We returned home in a return postchaise, (having dined with the Doctor,) and George kept wondering and wondering, for eight or nine turnpike miles, what was the name, and striving to recollect the name, of a poet anterior to Barbour. I begged to know what was remaining of his works. "There is nothing *extant* of his works, Sir; but by all accounts he seems to have been a fine genius!" This fine genius, without any thing to show for it, or any title beyond George's courtesy, without even a name; and Barbour, and Douglas, and Blind Harry, now are the predominant sounds in George's pia mater, and their

buzzings exclude politics, criticism, and algebra—the late lords of that illustrious lumber-room. Mark, he has never read any of these books, but is impatient till he reads them *all* at the Doctor's suggestion. Poor Dyer! his friends should be careful what sparks they let fall into such inflammable matter.

Could I have my will of the heathen, I would lock him up from all access of new ideas; I would exclude all critics that would not swear me first (upon their Virgil) that they would feed him with nothing but the old, safe, familiar notions and sounds, (the rightful aborigines of his brain)—Gray, Akenside, and Mason. In these sounds, reiterated as often as possible, there could be nothing painful, nothing distracting.

God bless me, here are the birds, smoking hot! All that is gross and unspiritual in me rises at the sight!

Avaunt friendship, and all memory of absent friends! C. Lamb.

LXXI. TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Aug. 26th, 1800

How do you like this little epigram? It is not my writing, nor had I any finger in it. If you concur with me in thinking it very elegant and very original, I shall be tempted to name the author to you. I will just hint that it is almost or quite a first attempt.

HELEN

High-born Helen, round your dwelling
These twenty years I've paced in vain:
Haughty beauty, thy lover's duty
Hath been to glory in his pain.

High-born Helen, proudly telling
Stories of thy cold disdain;
I starve, I die, now you comply,
And I no longer can complain.

These twenty years I've lived on tears,
Dwelling for ever on a frown;
On sighs I've fed, your scorn my bread;
I perish now you kind are grown.

Can I, who loved my beloved
But for the scorn "was in her eye?"
Can I be moved for my beloved,
When she "returns me sigh for sigh?"

In stately pride, by my bed-side,
High-born Helen's portrait hung;
Deaf to my praise, my mournful lays
Are nightly to the portrait sung.

To that I weep, nor ever sleep,
Complaining all night long to her.
Helen, grown old, no longer cold,
Said, "You to all men I prefer."

Godwin returned from Wicklow the week before

last. Tho' he did not reach home till the Tuesday after—He has been rambling in Wales—he might much better have spent that time with you—But you see your invitation would have come too late. He greatly regrets the occasion he missed of visiting you, but he intends to revisit Ireland in the next summer, and then he will certainly take Keswick in his way. I dined with the Heathen on Sunday

By the by, I have a sort of recollection that somebody, I think *you*, promised me a sight of Wordsworth's Tragedy. I should be very glad of it just now; for I have got Manning with me, and should like to read it *with him*. But this, I confess, is a refinement. Under any circumstances, alone, in Cold-Bath prison, or in the desert island, just when Prospero and his crew had set off, with Caliban in a cage to Milan, it would be a treat to me to read that play. Manning has read it, so has Lloyd, and all Lloyd's family; but I could not get him to betray his trust by giving *me* a sight of it. Lloyd is sadly deficient in some of those virtuous vices. I have just hit upon a most beautiful fiction of Hell punishments by the author of *Hurlo thumbo*, a mad farce. The inventor imagines that in Hell there is a great caldron of hot water, in which a man can scarce hold his finger, and an immense sieve over it, into which the probationary souls are put—

> "And all the little souls
> Pop through the riddle holes!"

Mary's love to Mrs Coleridge. Mine to all.
N.B. I pays no postage.

George Dyer is the only literary character I am happily acquainted with. The oftener I see him, the more deeply I admire him. He is goodness itself. If I could but calculate the precise date of his death, I would write a novel on purpose to make George the hero. I could hit him off to a hair.

George brought a Dr Anderson to see me. The doctor is a very pleasant old man, a great genius for agriculture, one that ties his breeches-knees with packthread, and boasts of having had disappointments from ministers. The doctor happened to mention an epic poem by one Wilkie, called the *Epigoniad*, in which he assured us there is not one tolerable line from beginning to end, but that all the characters, incidents, &c., are verbally copied from *Homer*. George, who had been sitting quite inattentive to the doctor's criticism, no sooner heard the sound of *Homer* strike his pericranicks, than up he gets, and declares he must see that poem immediately: where was it to be had? An epic poem of 8000 lines, and *he* not hear of it! There must be some good things in it, and it was necessary he should see it, for he had touched pretty deeply upon that subject in his criticisms on the Epic. George has touched pretty deeply upon the Lyric, I find; he has also prepared a dissertation on the Drama and the comparison of the English and German theatres. As I rather doubted his competency to do the latter, knowing that his peculiar *turn* lies in the lyric species of composition, I questioned George what English plays he had read. I found that he *had* read Shakspeare (whom he calls an original, but irregular, genius): but it was a good while ago; and he has dipped into Rowe and Otway, I suppose having found their names in *Johnson's Lives* at full length; and upon this slender ground he has undertaken the task. He never seemed even to have heard of Fletcher, Ford, Marlowe, Massinger, and the worthies of Dodsley's collection; but he is to read all these, to prepare him for bringing out his "Parallel" in the Winter. I find he is also determined to vindicate poetry from the shackles which Aristotle and some others have imposed upon it, which is very goodnatured of him, and very necessary just now. Now I am *touching* so *deeply* upon

poetry, can I forget that I have just received from Cottle a magnificent copy of his Guinea *Alfred*. Four-and-twenty books to read in the dog-days! I got as far as the Mad Monk the first day, and fainted. Mr Cottle's genius strongly points him to the *Pastoral*, but his inclinations divert him perpetually from his calling. He imitates Southey, as Rowe did Shakspeare, with his "Good morrow to ye; good master Lieutenant." Instead of *a* man, *a* woman, *a* daughter, he constantly writes one a man, one a woman, one his daughter. Instead of *the* king, *the* hero, he constantly writes, he the king, he the hero; two flowers of rhetoric, palpably from the "Joan." But Mr Cottle soars a higher pitch: and when he *is* original, it is in a most original way indeed. His terrific scenes are indefatigable. Serpents, asps, spiders, ghosts, dead bodies, staircases made of nothing, with adders' tongues for bannisters. What a brain he must have! He puts as many plums in his pudding as my grandmother used to do;—and then his emerging from Hell's horrors into light, and treading on pure flats of this earth—for twenty-three books together!

C. L.

LXXII. TO THOMAS MANNING

Oct. 5, 1800.

C. L.'s moral sense presents her compliments to Doctor Manning, is very thankful for his medical advice, but is happy to add that her disorder has died of itself.

Dr Manning, Coleridge has left us, to go into the North, on a visit to Wordsworth. With him have flown all my splendid prospects of engagement with the *Morning Post*, all my visionary guineas, the deceitful wages of unborn scandal. In truth, I wonder you took it up so seriously. All my intention was but to make a little sport with such public

and fair game as Mr Pitt, Mr Wilberforce, Mrs Fitzherbert, the Devil, &c.—gentry dipped in Styx all over, whom no paper javelin-lings can touch. To have made free with these cattle, where was the harm? 'twould have been but giving a polish to lamp-black, not nigrifying a negro primarily. After all, I cannot but regret my involuntary virtue. Damn virtue that's thrust upon us; it behaves itself with such constraint, till conscience opens the window and lets out the goose. I had struck off two imitations of Burton, quite abstracted from any modern illusions, which it was my intent only to lug in from time to time to make 'em popular.

Stuart has got these, with an introductory letter; but, not hearing from him, I have ceased from my labours, but I write to him to-day to get a final answer. I am afraid they won't do for a paper. Burton is a scarce gentleman, not much known, else I had done 'em pretty well.

I have also hit off a few lines in the name of Burton, being a "Conceit of Diabolic Possession." Burton was a man often assailed by deepest melancholy, and at other times much given to laughing and jesting, as is the way with melancholy men. I will send them to you: they were almost extempore, and no great things; but you will indulge them. Robert Lloyd is come to town. Priscilla meditates going to see *Pizarro* at Drury Lane to-night, (from her uncle's,) under cover of coming to dine with me . . . *heu tempora! heu mores!*—I have barely time to finish, as I expect her and Robin every minute.—Yours as usual.

C. L.

LXXIII. TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Oct. 9th, 1800.

I suppose you have heard of the death of Amos Cottle. I paid a solemn visit of condolence to his

brother, accompanied by George Dyer, of burlesque memory. I went, trembling to see poor Cottle so immediately upon the event. He was in black; and his younger brother was also in black. Every thing wore an aspect suitable to the respect due to the freshly dead. For some time after our entrance, nobody spake till George modestly put in a question, whether *Alfred* was likely to sell. This was Lethe to Cottle, and his poor face, wet with tears, and his kind eye brightened up in a moment. Now I felt it was my cue to speak. I had to thank him for a present of a magnificent copy, and had promised to send him my remarks,—the least thing I could do; so I ventured to suggest, that I perceived a considerable improvement he had made in his first book since the state in which he first read it to me. Joseph, who till now had sat with his knees cowering in by the fire-place, wheeled about, and with great difficulty of body shifted the same round to the corner of a table where I was sitting, and first stationing one thigh over the other, which is his sedentary mood, and placidly fixing his benevolent face right against mine, waited my observations. At that moment it came strongly into my mind, that I had got Uncle Toby before me, he looked so kind and so good. I could not say an unkind thing of *Alfred*. So I set my memory to work to recollect what was the name of Alfred's Queen, and with some adroitness recalled the well-known sound to Cottle's ears of Alswitha. At that moment I could perceive that Cottle had forgot his brother was so lately become a blessed spirit. In the language of mathematicians the author was as 9, the brother as 1. I felt my cue, and strong pity working at the root, I went to work, and beslabber'd *Alfred* with most unqualified praise, or only qualifying my praise by the occasional politic interposition of an exception taken against trivial faults, slips, and human imperfections, which, by removing

the appearance of insincerity, did but in truth heighten the relish. Perhaps I might have spared that refinement, for Joseph was in a humour to hope and believe *all things*. What I said was beautifully supported, corroborated, and confirmed by the stupidity of his brother on my left hand, and by George on my right, who has an utter incapacity of comprehending that there can be any thing bad in poetry. All poems are *good* poems to George; all men are *fine geniuses*. So what with my actual memory, of which I made the most, and Cottle's own helping me out, for I *really* had forgotten a good deal of *Alfred*, I made shift to discuss the most essential parts entirely to the satisfaction of its author, who repeatedly declared that he loved nothing better than *candid* criticism. Was I a candid greyhound now for all this? or did I do right? I believe I did. The effect was luscious to my conscience. For all the rest of the evening Amos was no more heard of, till George revived the subject by inquiring whether some account should not be drawn up by the friends of the deceased to be inserted in Phillips's Monthly Obituary; adding, that Amos was estimable both for his head and heart, and would have made a fine poet if he had lived. To the expediency of this measure Cottle fully assented, but could not help adding that he always thought that the qualities of his brother's heart exceeded those of his head. I believe his brother, when living, had formed precisely the same idea of him; and I apprehend the world will assent to both judgments. I rather guess that the Brothers were poetical rivals. I judged so when I saw them together. Poor Cottle, I must leave him, after his short dream, to muse again upon his poor brother, for whom I am sure in secret he will yet shed many a tear. Now send me in return some Greta news.

C. L.

LXXIV. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Oct, 13th, 1800.

Dear Wordsworth,—I have not forgot your commissions. But the truth is, (and why should I not confess it?) I am not plethorically abounding in cash at this present. Merit, God knows, is very little rewarded; but it does not become me to speak of myself. My motto is "contented with little, yet wishing for more." Now, the books you wish for would require some pounds, which, I am sorry to say, I have not by me; so I will say at once, if you will give me a draft upon your town banker for any sum you propose to lay out, I will dispose of it to the very best of my skill in choice old books, such as my own soul loveth. In fact, I have been waiting for the liquidation of a debt to enable myself to set about your commission handsomely; for it is a scurvy thing to cry, "Give me the money first," and I am the first of the family of the Lambs that have done it for many centuries; but the debt remains as it was, and my old friend that I accommodated has generously forgot it! The books which you want, I calculate at about £8. Ben Jonson is a guinea book. Beaumont and Fletcher, in folio, the right folio not now to be met with; the octavos are about £3. As to any other dramatists, I do not know where to find them, except what are in Dodsley's Old Plays, which are about £3 also. Massinger I never saw but at one shop, and it is now gone; but one of the editions of Dodsley contains about a fourth (the best) of his plays. Congreve, and the rest of King Charles's moralists, are cheap and accessible. The works on Ireland I will inquire after; but I fear Spenser's is not to be had apart from his poems; I never saw it. But you may depend upon my sparing no pains to furnish you as complete a library of old poets and dramatists as will be prudent to buy; for, I suppose

you do not include the £20 edition of *Hamlet*, single play, which Kemble has. Marlowe's plays and poems are totally vanished; only one edition of Dodsley retains one, and the other two of his plays: but John Ford is the man after Shakspeare. Let me know your will and pleasure soon, for I have observed, next to the pleasure of buying a bargain for one's self, is the pleasure of persuading a friend to buy it. It tickles one with the image of an imprudency, without the penalty usually annexed.

C. Lamb.

LXXV. TO THOMAS MANNING

Oct. 16th, 1800.

Dear Manning,—Had you written one week before you did, I certainly should have obeyed your injunction; you should have seen me before my letter. I will explain to you my situation. There are six of us in one department. Two of us (within these four days) are confined with severe fevers; and two more, who belong to the Tower Militia, expect to have marching orders on Friday. Now six are absolutely necessary. I have already asked and obtained two young hands to supply the loss of the *feverites*. And, with the other prospect before me, you may believe I cannot decently ask leave of absence for myself. All I can promise (and I do promise, with the sincerity of St Peter, and the contrition of sinner Peter if I fail) that I will come *the very first spare week*, and go nowhere till I have been at Cambridge. No matter if you are in a state of pupilage when I come; for I can employ myself in Cambridge very pleasantly in the mornings. Are there not libraries, halls, colleges, books, pictures, statues? I wish you had made London in your way. There is an exhibition quite uncommon in Europe, which could not have escaped *your genius*,—a live rattlesnake, ten feet in

length, and the thickness of a big leg. I went to see it last night by candlelight. We were ushered into a room very little bigger than ours at Pentonville. A man and woman and four boys live in this room, joint tenants with nine snakes, most of them such as no remedy has been discovered for their bite. We walked into the middle, which is formed by a half-moon of wired boxes, all mansions of *snakes*—whip-snakes, thunder-snakes, pig-nose-snakes, American vipers, and *this monster*. He lies curled up in folds. Immediately a stranger entered (for he is used to the family, and sees them play at cards,) he set up a rattle like a watchman's in London, or near as loud, and reared up a head, from the midst of these folds, like a toad, and shook his head, and showed every sign a snake can show of irritation. I had the foolish curiosity to strike the wires with my finger, and the devil flew at me with his toad-mouth wide open; the inside of his mouth is quite white. I had got my finger away, nor could he well have bit me with his big mouth, which would have been certain death in five minutes. But it frightened me so much, that I did not recover my voice for a minute's space. I forgot, in my fear, that he was secured. You would have forgot too, for 'tis incredible how such a monster can be confined in small gauzy-looking wires. I dreamed of snakes in the night. I wish to heaven you could see it. He absolutely swelled with passion to the bigness of a large thigh. I could not retreat without infringing on another box; and just behind, a little devil not an inch from my back had got his nose out, with some difficulty and pain, quite through the bars! He was soon taught better manners. All the snakes were curious, and objects of terror: but this monster, like Aaron's serpent, swallowed up the impression of the rest. He opened his cursed mouth, when he made at me, as wide as his head

was broad. I hallooed out quite loud, and felt pains all over my body with the fright.

I have had the felicity of hearing George Dyer read out one book of the *Farmer's Boy*. I thought it rather childish. No doubt, there is originality in it, (which, in your self-taught geniuses, is a most rare quality, they generally getting hold of some bad models, in a scarcity of books, and forming their taste on them,) but no *selection*. *All* is described.

Mind, I have only heard read one book.

Yours sincerely,

Philo-Snake,

C. L.

LXXVI. TO THE SAME

November 3rd, 1800.

Ecquid meditatur Archimedes? What is Euclid doing? What hath happened to learned Trismegist? Doth he take it in ill part, that his humble friend did not comply with his courteous invitation? Let it suffice, I could not come. Are impossibilities nothing?—be they abstractions of the intellect?—or not (rather) most sharp and mortifying realities? nuts in the Will's mouth too hard for her to crack? brick and stone walls in her way, which she can by no means eat through? sore lets, *impedimenta viarum*, no thoroughfares? *racemi nimium alte pendentes?* Is the phrase classic? I allude to the grapes in Æsop, which cost the fox a strain, and gained the world an aphorism. Observe the superscription of this letter. In adapting the size of the letters, which constitute *your* name and Mr *Crisp's* name respectively, I had an eye to your different stations in life. 'Tis truly curious, and must be soothing to an *aristocrat*. I wonder it has never been hit on before my time. I have made an acquisition latterly of a *pleasant hand*, one Rickman, to whom

I was introduced by George Dyer, not the most flattering auspices under which one man can be introduced to another. George brings all sorts of people together, setting up a sort of agrarian law, or common property, in matter of society; but for once he has done me a great pleasure, while he was only pursuing a principle, as *ignes fatui may* light you home. This Rickman lives in our Buildings, immediately opposite our house; the finest fellow to drop in a' nights, about nine or ten o'clock—cold bread-and-cheese time—just in the *wishing* time of the night, when you *wish* for some body to come in, without a distinct idea of a probable any body. Just in the nick, neither too early to be tedious, nor too late to sit a reasonable time. He is a most pleasant hand; a fine rattling fellow, has gone through life laughing at solemn apes;—himself hugely literate, oppressively full of information in all stuff of conversation, from matter of fact to Xenophon and Plato—can talk Greek with Porson, politics with Thelwall, conjecture with George Dyer, nonsense with me, and any thing with any body; a great farmer, somewhat concerned in an agricultural magazine; reads no poetry but Shakspeare; very intimate with Southey, but never reads his poetry; relishes George Dyer; thoroughly penetrates into the ridiculous wherever found; understands the *first time* (a great desideratum in common minds)—you need never twice speak to him; does not want explanations, translations, limitations, as Professor Godwin does when you make an assertion; *up* to any thing; *down* to every thing; whatever *sapit hominem*. A perfect *man*. All this farrago, which must perplex you to read, and has put me to a little trouble to *select*, only proves how impossible it is to describe a *pleasant hand*. You must see Rickman to know him, for he is a species in one; a new class; an exotic; any slip of which I am proud to put in my garden-pot; the clearest headed fellow; fullest of matter, with least verbosity. If

there be any alloy in my fortune to have met with such a man, it is that he commonly divides his time between town and country, having some foolish family ties at Christchurch, by which means he can only gladden our London hemisphere with returns of light. He is now going for six weeks.

At last I have written to Kemble, to know the event of my play, which was presented last Christmas. As I suspected, came an answer back that the copy was lost, and could not be found—no hint that any body had to this day ever looked into it—with a courteous (reasonable !) request of another copy (if I had one by me), and a promise of a definitive answer in a week. I could not resist so facile and moderate a demand; so scribbled out another, omitting sundry things, such as the witch story, about half of the forest scene, (which is too leisurely for story), and transposing that soliloquy about England getting drunk, which, like its reciter, stupidly stood alone, nothing prevenient or antevenient; and cleared away a good deal besides; and sent this copy, written *all out* (with alterations, &c. *requiring judgment*) in one day and a half! I sent it last night, and am in weekly expectation of the tolling bell and death-warrant.

This is all my London news. Send me some from the *banks of Cam*, as the poets delight to speak, especially George Dyer, who has no other name nor idea nor definition of Cambridge. Its being a market town, sending members to Parliament, never entered into his definition. It was and is simply the banks of the Cam, or the fair Cam, as Oxford is the banks of the Isis, or the fair Isis. Yours in all humility, most illustrious Trismegist, C. Lamb.

(Read on; there's more at the bottom.)

You ask me about the *Farmer's Boy*. Don't you think the fellow who wrote it (who is a shoemaker)

has a poor mind? Don't you find he is always silly about *poor Giles*, and those abject kind of phrases, which mark a man that looks up to wealth? None of Burns's poet dignity. What do you think? I have just opened him; but he makes me sick.

Dyer knows the shoemaker, a damn'd stupid hound in company; but George promises to introduce him indiscriminately to all friends.

LXXVII. TO THE SAME

[Nov. 28th, 1800.]

Dear Manning,—I have received a very kind invitation from Lloyd and Sophia, to go and spend a month with them at the Lakes. Now it fortunately happens (which is so seldom the case) that I have spare cash by me, enough to answer the expenses of so long a journey; and I am determined to get away from the office by some means. The purpose of this letter is to request of you (my dear friend), that you will not take it unkind if I decline my proposed visit to Cambridge *for the present*. Perhaps I shall be able to take Cambridge *in my way*, going or coming. I need not describe to you the expectations which such an one as myself, pent up all my life in a dirty city, have formed of a tour to the Lakes. Consider Grasmere! Ambleside! Wordsworth! Coleridge! I hope you will. Hills, woods, lakes, and mountains, to the devil. I will eat snipes with thee, Thomas Manning Only confess, confess, a *bite*.

P.S. I think you named the 16th; but was it not modest of Lloyd to send such an invitation! It shows his knowledge of *money* and *time*. I should be loth to think he meant

> "Ironic satire sidelong sklented
> On my poor pursie."—Burns.

For my part, with reference to my friends northward,

I must confess that I am not romance-bit about *Nature*. The earth, and sea, and sky, (when all is said,) is but as a house to dwell in. If the inmates be courteous, and good liquors flow like the conduits at an old coronation, if they can talk sensibly, and feel properly, I have no need to stand staring upon the gilded looking-glass (that strained my friend's purse-strings in the purchase) nor his five-shilling print, over the mantel-piece, of old Nabbs the carrier, (which only betrays his false taste). Just as important to me (in a sense) is all the furniture of my world; eye-pampering, but satisfies no heart. Streets, streets, streets, markets, theatres, churches, Covent Gardens, shops sparkling with pretty faces of industrious milliners, neat sempstresses, ladies cheapening, gentlemen behind counters lying, authors in the street with spectacles, George Dyers, (you may know them by their gait,) lamps lit at night, pastry-cooks' and silversmiths' shops, beautiful Quakers of Pentonville, noise of coaches, drowsy cry of mechanic watchmen at night, with bucks reeling home drunk; if you happen to wake at midnight, cries of "Fire!" and "Stop thief!" inns of court, with their learned air, and halls, and butteries, just like Cambridge colleges; old book-stalls, "Jeremy Taylors," "Burtons on Melancholy," and "Religio Medicis," on every stall. These are thy pleasures, O London! with thy many sins. O City, abounding in w . . . . ., for these may Keswick and her giant brood go hang! C. L.

LXXVIII. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

Thursday morning [Dec. 4.]

Dear Sir,—I send this speedily after the heels of Cooper (O! the dainty expression) to say that Mary is obliged to stay at home on Sunday to receive a female friend, from whom I am equally glad to escape.

So that we shall be by ourselves. I write, because it may make *some* difference in your marketting, &c.

C. L.

I am sorry to put you to the expense of twopence postage. But I calculate thus: if Mary comes she will

eat Beef 2 plates, .	4d.	
Batter Pudding 1 do. .	2d.	
Beer, a pint, . . .	2d.	
Wine, 3 glasses, . .	11d.	I drink no wine!
Chesnuts, after dinner, .	2d.	
Tea and supper at moderate calculation, . . .	9d.	
	2s 6d.	
From which deduct	2d.	postage
	2s. 4d.	

You are a clear gainer by her not coming.

LXXIX. TO THE SAME

Wednesday morning [Dec. 11].

Dear Sir,—I expected a good deal of pleasure from your company to-morrow, but I am sorry I must beg of you to excuse me. I have been confined ever since I saw you with one of the severest colds I ever experienced, occasioned by being in the night air on Sunday, and on the following day, very foolishly. I am neither in health nor spirits to meet company. I hope and trust I shall get out on Saturday night. You will add to your many favours, by transmitting to me as early as possible as many tickets as conveniently you can spare,—Yours truly, C. L.

I have been plotting how to abridge the Epilogue. But I cannot see that any lines can be spared, retaining the connection, except these two, which are better out.

> "Why should I instance, &c.,
> The sick man's purpose, &c.,"

and then the following line must run thus,

> "The truth by an example best is shown."

Excuse this *important* postscript.

"Enviable" is a very bad word. I allude to "Enviable right to bless us." For instance, Burns, comparing the ills of manhood with the state of infancy, says. "Oh! enviable early days"; here 'tis good, because the passion lay in comparison. Excuse my insulting your judgment with an illustration. I believe I only wanted to beg in the name of a favourite Bardie, or at most to confirm my own judgment.

LXXX. TO THOMAS MANNING

Dec. 13th, 1800.

I have received your letter *this moment*, not having been at the office. I have just time to scribble down the epilogue. To your epistle I will just reply, that I will certainly come to Cambridge before January is out; I'll come *when I can*. You shall have an amended copy of my play early next week. Mary thanks you; but her handwriting is too feminine to be exposed to a Cambridge gentleman, though I endeavour to persuade her that you understand algebra, and must understand her hand. The play is the man's you wot of; but for Heaven's sake do not mention it: it is to come out in a feigned name, as one Tobin's. I will omit the introductory lines which connect it with the play, and give you the concluding tale, which is the

mass and bulk of the epilogue. The name is *Jack Incident*. It is all about promise-breaking: you will see it all, if you read the *papers*.

> Jack, of dramatic genius justly vain,
> Purchased a renter's share at Drury Lane.

(Here follows the Epilogue to Godwin's "Antonio.")

* * * *

> About a harmless play why all this fright?
> I'll go and see it, if 'tis but for spite—
> Zounds, woman! Nelson's to be there to-night."

N.B.—This was intended for Jack Bannister to speak; but the sage managers have chosen Miss *Heard*, except Miss Tidswell, the worst actress ever seen or *heard*. Now I remember I have promised the loan of my play. I will lend it *instantly*, and you shall get it ('pon honour!) by this day week.

I must go and dress for the boxes! First night! Finding I have time, I transcribe the rest. Observe, you must read the last first; it begins thus:—(The names I took from a little outline G. gave me. I have not read the play.)

> "Ladies, ye've heard how Guzman's consort died,
> Poor victim of a Spaniard brother's pride,
> When Spanish honour through the world was blown,
> And Spanish beauty for the best was known.
> In that romantic unenlighten'd time,
> A *breach* of *promise* was a sort of crime:
> A whimsical old Saragossa fashion,
> That a dead father's dying inclination
> Should *live* to thwart a living daughter's passion.
> Unjustly on the sex *we* men exclaim,
> Rail at *your* * * vices,—and commit the same.
> What need we instance here the lover's vow,
> The sick man's purpose, or the great man's bow?"

Now you have it all—how do you like it? I am going to hear it recited!!!

C. L.

LXXXI. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

Late o' Sunday [Dec. 14].

Dear Sir,—I have performed my office in a slovenly way, but judge for me. I sat down at 6 o'clock, and never left reading (and I read out to Mary) your play till 10. In this sitting I noted down lines as they occurred, exactly as you will read my rough paper. Do not be frightened at the bulk of my remarks, for they are almost all upon single lines, which, put together, do not amount to a hundred, and many of them merely verbal. I had but one object in view, abridgement for compression sake. I have used a dogmatical language (which is truly ludicrous when the trivial nature of my remarks is considered), and, remember, my office was to hunt out faults. You may fairly abridge one half of them, as a fair deduction for the infirmities of Error, and a single reading, which leaves only fifty objections, most of them merely against words, on no short play. Remember, you constituted me Executioner, and a hangman has been seldom seen to be ashamed of his profession before Master Sheriff. We'll talk of the Beauties (of which I am more than ever sure) when we meet,—Yours truly, C. L.

I will barely add, as you are on the very point of printing, that in my opinion neither prologue nor epilogue should accompany the play. It can only serve to remind your readers of its fate. *Both* suppose an audience, and, that jest being gone, must convert into burlesque. Nor would I (but therein custom and decorum must be a law) print the actors' names. Some things must be kept out of sight.

I have done, and I have but a few square inches of paper to fill up. I am emboldened by a little jorum of punch (vastly good) to say that next to *one man*, I am the most hurt at our ill success. The breast of

Hecuba, where she did suckle Hector, looked not to be more lovely than Marshal's forehead when it spit forth sweat, at Critic-swords contending. I remember two honest lines by Marvel, (whose poems by the way I am just going to possess).

> "Where every Mower's wholesome heat
> Smells like an Alexander sweat."

LXXXII. TO THOMAS MANNING

Dec. 16th, 1800.

We are damn'd !—Not the facetious epilogue itself could save us; for, as the editor of the *Morning Post* (quick-sighted gentleman !) hath this morning truly observed, (I beg pardon if I falsify his *words*; their profound *sense* I am sure I retain;) both prologue and epilogue were worthy of accompanying such a piece; and indeed (mark the profundity, Mr Manning !) were received with proper indignation by such of the audience only as thought either worth attending to. Professor, thy glories wax dim ! Again, the incomparable author of the *True Briton* declareth in *his* paper (bearing same date) that the epilogue was an indifferent attempt at humour and character, and failed in both. I forbear to mention the other papers, because I have not read them. O Professor, how different thy feelings now (*quantam mutatus ab illo professore, qui in agris philosophiæ tantas victorias acquisivisti*), —how different thy proud feeling but one little week ago — thy anticipations of thy nine nights — those visionary claps, which have soothed thy soul by day and thy dreams by night ! Calling in accidentally on the Professor while he was out, I was ushered into the study; and my nose quickly (most sagacious always) pointed me to four tokens lying loose upon thy table, Professor, which indicated thy violent and satanical pride of heart. *Imprimis*, there caught mine eye a list of six persons, thy friends, whom thou didst

meditate inviting to a sumptuous dinner on the Thursday, anticipating the profits of thy Saturday's play to answer charges: I was in the honoured file! Next (a stronger evidence of thy violent and almost satanical pride) lay a list of all the morning papers, (from the *Morning Chronicle* downwards to the *Porcupine*,) with the places of their respective offices, where thou wast meditating to insert, and didst insert, an elaborate sketch of the story of thy play; stones in thy enemy's hand to bruise thee with, and severely wast thou bruised, O Professor! nor do I know what oil to pour into thy wounds. Next (which convinced me to a dead conviction of thy pride, violent and almost satanical pride!) lay a list of books which thy untragedy-favoured pocket could never answer: Dodsley's Old Plays, Malone's Shakspeare, (still harping upon thy play, thy philosophy abandoned meanwhile to Christians and superstitious minds); nay, I believe (if I can believe my memory) that the ambitious Encyclopædia itself was part of thy meditated acquisitions; but many a playbook was there. All these visions are *damned*; and thou, Professor, must read Shakspeare in future out of a common edition; and, hark ye! pray read him to a little better purpose. Last and strongest against thee (in colours manifest as the hand upon Belshazzar's wall) lay a volume of poems by C. Lloyd and C. Lamb. Thy heart misgave thee, that thy assistant might possibly not have talent enough to furnish thee an epilogue! Manning, all these things came over my mind; all the gratulations that would have thickened upon him, and even some have glanced aside upon his humble friend; the vanity, and the fame, and the profits, (the Professor is £500 ideal money out of pocket by this failure, besides £200 he would have got for the copyright, and the Professor is never much beforehand with the world; what he gets is all by the sweat of his brow and dint of brain, for the Professor, though a sure man, is also

a slow); and now to muse upon thy altered physiognomy, thy pale and squalid appearance, (a kind of *blue sickness* about the eyelids,) and thy crest fallen, and thy proud demand of £200 from thy bookseller changed to an uncertainty of his taking it at all, or giving thee full £50. The Professor has won my heart by this *his* mournful catastrophe. You remember Marshall, who dined with him at my house; I met him in the lobby immediately after the damnation of the Professor's play, and he looked to me like an angel; his face was lengthened, and all over perspiration. I never saw such a care-fraught visage; I could have hugged him, I loved him so intensely. "From every pore of him a perfume fell." I have seen that man in many situations, and, from my soul, I think that a more god-like honest soul exists not in this world. The Professor's poor nerves trembling with the recent shock, he hurried him away to my house to supper, and there we comforted him as well as we could. He came to consult me about a change of catastrophe; but alas! the piece was condemned long before that crisis. I at first humoured him with a specious proposition, but have since joined his true friends in advising him to give it up. He did it with a pang, and is to print it as *his*. L.

LXXXIII. TO THE SAME

December 27th, 1800.

At length George Dyer's phrenitis has come to a crisis; he is raging and furiously mad. I waited upon the Heathen, Thursday was a se'nnight. The first symptom which struck my eye, and gave me incontrovertible proof of the fatal truth, was a pair of nankeen pantaloons four times too big for him, which the said Heathen did pertinaciously affirm to be new.

They were absolutely ingrained with the accumu-

lated dirt of ages; but he affirmed them to be clean. He was going to visit a lady that was nice about those things, and that's the reason he wore nankeen that day. And then he danced, and capered, and fidgeted, and pulled up his pantaloons, and hugged his intolerable flannel vestment closer about his poetic loins. Anon he gave it loose to the zephyrs which plentifully insinuate their tiny bodies through every crevice, door, window, or wainscot, expressly formed for the exclusion of such impertinents. Then he caught at a proof sheet, and catched up a laundress's bill instead —made a dart at Bloomfield's Poems, and threw them in agony aside. I could not bring him to one direct reply; he could not maintain his jumping mind in a right line for the tithe of a moment by Clifford's Inn clock. He must go to the printer's immediately: (the most unlucky accident!) he had struck off five hundred impressions of his Poems, which were ready for delivery to subscribers, and the Preface must all be expunged. There were eighty pages of Preface, and not till that morning had he discovered that in the very first page of said Preface he had set out with a principle of Criticism fundamentally wrong, which vitiated all his following reasoning. The Preface must be expunged, although it cost him £30, the lowest calculation, taking in paper and printing! In vain have his real friends remonstrated against this Midsummer madness. George is as obstinate as a Primitive Christian, and wards and parries off all our thrusts with one unanswerable fence:—"Sir, 'tis of great consequence that the *world* is not *misled*!"

As for the other Professor, he has actually begun to dive into Tavernier and Chardin's *Persian* Travels for a story, to form a new drama for the sweet tooth of this fastidious age. Hath not Bethlehem College a fair action for non-residents against such professors? Are poets so *few* in *this age*, that He must write poetry? *Is morals* a subject so exhausted, that he

must quit that line? Is the metaphysic well (without a bottom) drained dry?

If I can guess at the wicked pride of the Professor's heart, I would take a shrewd wager that he disdains ever again to dip his pen in *Prose*. Adieu, ye splendid theories! Farewell, dreams of political justice! Lawsuits, where I was council for Archbishop Fenelon *versus* my own mother, in the famous fire cause!

Vanish from my mind, professors, one and all! I have metal more attractive on foot.

Man of many snipes,—I will sup with thee (Deo volente, et diabolo nolente,) on Monday night, the 5th of January, in the new year, and crush a cup to the infant century.

A word or two of my progress: Embark at six o'clock in the morning, with a fresh gale, on a Cambridge one-decker; very cold till eight at night; land at St Mary's light-house, muffins and coffee upon table, (or any other curious production of Turkey, or both Indies,) snipes exactly at nine, punch to commence at ten, with *argument*; difference of opinion is expected to take place about eleven; perfect unanimity, with some haziness and dimness, before twelve. —N.B. My single affection is not so singly wedded to snipes; but the curious and epicurean eye would also take a pleasure in beholding a delicate and well-chosen assortment of teals, ortolans, the unctuous and palate-soothing flesh of geese, wild and tame, nightingales' brains, the sensorium of a young sucking pig, or any other Christmas dish, which I leave to the judgment of you and the cook of Gonville.

C. Lamb.

LXXXIV. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Jan. 30th, 1801.

I ought before this to have replied to your very kind invitation into Cumberland. With you and your sister I could gang anywhere; but I am afraid whether I shall ever be able to afford so desperate a journey. Separate from the pleasure of your company, I don't much care if I never see a mountain in my life. I have passed all my days in London, until I have formed as many and intense local attachments as any of you mountaineers can have done with dead Nature. The lighted shops of the Strand and Fleet Street; the innumerable trades, tradesmen, and customers, coaches, waggons, playhouses; all the bustle and wickedness round about Covent Garden; the very women of the Town; the watchmen, drunken scenes, rattles; life awake, if you awake, at all hours of the night; the impossibility of being dull in Fleet Street; the crowds, the very dirt and mud, the sun shining upon houses and pavements, the print-shops, the old book-stalls, parsons cheapening books, coffee-houses, steams of soups from kitchens, the pantomimes—London itself a pantomime and a masquerade—all these things work themselves into my mind, and feed me, without a power of satiating me. The wonder of these sights impels me into night-walks about her crowded streets, and I often shed tears in the motley Strand from fulness of joy at so much life. All these emotions must be strange to you; so are your rural emotions to me. But consider, what must I have been doing all my life, not to have lent great portions of my heart with usury to such scenes?

My attachments are all local, purely local. I have no passion (or have had none since I was in love, and then it was the spurious engendering of poetry and books,) for groves and valleys. The rooms where I was born, the furniture which has been before my

Fleet Street, near Temple Bar, in 1799, from a print in the British Museum.

eyes all my life, a book-case which has followed me about like a faithful dog, (only exceeding him in knowledge,) wherever I have moved, old chairs, old tables, streets, squares, where I have sunned myself, my old school,—these are my mistresses. Have I not enough, without your mountains? I do not envy you. I should pity you, did I not know that the mind will make friends of any thing. Your sun, and moon, and skies, and hills, and lakes, affect me no more, or scarcely come to me in more venerable characters, than as a gilded room with tapestry and tapers, where I might live with handsome visible objects. I consider the clouds above me but as a roof beautifully painted, but unable to satisfy the mind: and at last, like the pictures of the apartment of a connoisseur, unable to afford him any longer a pleasure. So fading upon me, from disuse, have been the beauties of Nature, as they have been confinedly called; so ever fresh, and green, and warm are all the inventions of men, and assemblies of men in this great city. I should certainly have laughed with dear Joanna.

Give my kindest love, and my sister's, to D. and yourself; and a kiss from me to little Barbara Lewthwaite. Thank you for liking my play.

C. L.

LXXXV. TO THE SAME

Feb. 1801.

Thanks for your letter and present. I had already borrowed your second volume. What most pleases me is, "The Song of Lucy," *Simon's sickly daughter*, in "The Sexton," made me *cry*. Next to these are the description of these continuous echoes in the story of "Joanna's Laugh," where the mountains, and all the scenery absolutely seem alive; and that

fine Shakspearian character of the "happy man," in the "Brothers,"

> ——— "that creeps about the fields,
> Following his fancies by the hour, to bring
> Tears down his cheek, or solitary smiles
> Into his face, until the setting sun
> Write Fool upon his forehead!"

I will mention one more—the delicate and curious feeling in the wish for the "Cumberland Beggar," that he may have about him the melody of birds, although he hear them not. Here the mind knowingly passes a fiction upon herself, first substituting her own feeling for the Beggar's, and in the same breath detecting the fallacy, will not part with the wish. The "Poet's Epitaph" is disfigured, to my taste, by the common satire upon parsons and lawyers in the beginning, and the coarse epithet of "pinpoint," in the sixth stanza. All the rest is eminently good, and your own. I will just add that it appears to me a fault in the "Beggar," that the instructions conveyed in it are too direct, and like a lecture: they don't slide into the mind of the reader while he is imagining no such matter. An intelligent reader finds a sort of insult in being told, "I will teach you how to think upon this subject." This fault, if I am right, is in a ten-thousandth worse degree to be found in Sterne, and in many novelists and modern poets, who continually put a sign-post up to show where you are to feel. They set out with assuming their readers to be stupid; very different from *Robinson Crusoe*, the *Vicar of Wakefield*, *Roderick Random*, and other beautiful, bare narratives. There is implied an unwritten compact between author and reader; "I will tell you a story, and I suppose you will understand it." Modern novels, *St Leons* and the like, are full of such flowers as these—"Let not my reader suppose," "Imagine, if you can, modest!" &c. I will here have done with praise and blame. I have written so much, only that

you may not think I have passed over your book without observation. . . . . .
I am sorry that Coleridge has christened his *Ancient Marinere*, a *Poet's Reverie*; it is as bad as Bottom the Weaver's declaration that he is not a lion, but only the scenical representation of a lion. What new idea is gained by this title but one subversive of all credit—which the tale should force upon us—of its truth!

For me, I was never so affected with any human tale. After first reading it, I was totally possessed with it for many days. I dislike all the miraculous part of it; but the feelings of the man under the operation of such scenery, dragged me along like Tom Pipe's magic whistle. I totally differ from your idea that the *Marinere* should have had a character and profession. This is a beauty in *Gulliver's Travels*, where the mind is kept in a placid state of little wonderments; but the *Ancient Marinere* undergoes such trials as overwhelm and bury all individuality or memory of what he was—like the state of a man in a bad dream, one terrible peculiarity of which is, that all consciousness of personality is gone. Your other observation is, I think as well, a little unfounded: the "Marinere," from being conversant in supernatural events, *has* acquired a supernatural and strange cast of *phrase*, eye, appearance, &c., which frighten the "wedding guest." You will excuse my remarks, because I am hurt and vexed that you should think it necessary, with a prose apology, to open the eyes of dead men that cannot see.

To sum up a general opinion of the second volume, I do not feel any one poem in it so forcibly as the *Ancient Marinere*, and the "Mad Mother," and the "Lines at Tintern Abbey" in the first.

LXXXVI. TO ROBERT LLOYD

[February 7, 1801.]

Dear Robert,—I shall expect you to bring me a brimful account of the pleasure which Walton has given you, when you come to town. It must square with your mind. The delightful innocence and healthfulness of the Angler's mind will have blown upon yours like a Zephyr. Don't you already feel your spirit *filled* with the scenes?—the banks of rivers —the cowslip beds—the pastoral scenes—the neat alehouses—the hostesses and milkmaids; as far exceeding Virgil and Pope, as the *Holy Living* is beyond Thomas à Kempis.—Are not the eating and drinking joys painted to the life? do they not inspire you with an immortal hunger? Are not you ambitious of being made an Angler? What edition have you got? is it Hawkins's with plates of Piscator &c.? That sells very dear. I have only been able to purchase the last Edition, without the old Plates, which pleased my childhood;—the plates being worn out, and the old Edition difficult and expensive to procure.—The *Complete Angler* is the only Treatise written in Dialogues that is worth a halfpenny.—Many eloquent dialogues have been written (such as Bishop Berkley's *Minute Philosopher*) but in all of them the Interlocutors are merely abstract arguments personify'd; not living dramatic characters, as in Walton; where *every thing* is *alive*, the fishes are absolutely *charactered*, and birds and animals are as interesting as men and women. I need not be at much pains to get the *Holy Livings*—We can procure them in ten minutes search at any stall or shop in London. By your engaging one for Priscilla, it should seem *she* will be in Town. Is that the case?—I thought she was fix'd at the Lakes. I perfectly understand the nature of your solitariness at Birm—and wish I could divide myself, "like a bribed haunch" between

London and it. But courage! — You will soon be emancipated and (it may be) have a frequent power of visiting this great place. Let them talk of Lakes and mountains and romantic dales all that fantastic stuff;—give me a ramble by night, in the winter nights in London—the lamps lit—the pavements of the motley Strand crowded with to-and-fro passengers—the shops all brilliant, and stuffed with obliging customers and obliged tradesmen. Give me the old Bookstalls of London—a walk in the bright Piazzas of Covent Garden. I defy a man to be dull in such places—perfect Mahometan paradises upon Earth. I have lent out my heart with usury to such scenes, from my childhood up—and have cried with fulness of joy at the multitudinous scenes of Life in the crowded streets of ever dear London.—I wish you could fix here. I don't know if you quite comprehend my low Urban Taste; but depend upon it that a man of any feeling will have given his heart and his love in childhood and in boyhood to any scenes where he has been bred, as well to dirty streets (and smoky walls as they are called) as to Green Lanes "where live nibbling sheep—and to the everlasting hills and the Lakes and ocean. A mob of men is better than a flock of sheep; and a crowd of happy faces justling into the playhouse at the hour of six is a more beautiful spectacle to man than the shepherd driving his "silly" sheep to fold.

Come to London and learn to sympathize with my unrural notions. Wordsworth has published a second vol. *Lyrical Ballads*. Most of them very good—but not so good as first vol. What more can I tell you? —I believe I told you I have been to see *Manning*. He is a dainty Chiel—A man of great Power, an enchanter almost: far beyond Coleridge or any man in power of impressing. When he gets you alone, he can act the wonders of Egypt.—Only he is lazy and does not always put forth all his strength; if he

did, I know no man of genius at all comparable to him.

Yours as ever

C. L.

LXXXVII. TO THOMAS MANNING

[1801.]

You masters of logic ought to know (logic is nothing more than a knowledge of *words*, as the Greek etymon implies,) that all words are no more to be taken in a literal sense at all times than a promise given to a tailor. When I exprest an apprehension that you were mortally offended, I meant no more than by the application of a certain formula of efficacious sounds, which had *done* in similar cases before, to rouse a sense of decency in you, and a remembrance of what was due to me! You masters of logic should advert to this phenomenon in human speech, before you arraign the usage of us dramatic geniuses. Imagination is a good blood mare, and goes well: but the misfortune is, she has too many paths before her. 'Tis true I might have imagined to myself, that you had trundled your frail carcass to Norfolk. I might also, and did imagine, that you had not, but that you were lazy, or inventing new properties in a triangle, and for that purpose moulding and squeezing Landlord Crisp's three-cornered beaver into fantastic experimental forms; or, that Archimedes was meditating to repulse the French, in case of a Cambridge invasion, by a geometric hurling of folios on their red caps; or, peradventure, that you were in extremities, in great wants, and just set out for Trinity Bogs when my letters came. In short, my genius (which is a short word, now-a-days, for what-a-great-man-am-I!) was absolutely stifled and overlaid with its own riches. Truth is one and poor, like the cruse of Elijah's widow. Imagination is the bold

face that multiplies its oil; and thou, the old cracked pipkin, that could not believe it could be put to such purposes. Dull pipkin, to have Elijah for thy cook! Imbecile recipient of so fat a miracle! I send you George Dyer's Poems, the richest production of the lyrical muse *this century* can justly boast: for Wordsworth's L. B. were published, or at least written, before Christmas.

Please to advert to pages 291 to 296 for the most astonishing account of where Shakspeare's muse has been all this while. I thought she had been dead, and buried in Stratford Church, with the young man *that kept her company*,—

> "But it seems, like the Devil,
> Buried in Cole Harbour,
> Some say she's risen again,
> Gone 'prentice to a barber."

N.B.—I don't charge any thing for the additional manuscript notes, which are the joint productions of myself and a learned translator of Schiller, [John] Stoddart, Esq.

N.B. the 2nd.—I should not have blotted your book, but I had sent my own out to be bound, as I was in duty bound. A liberal criticism upon the several pieces, lyrical, heroical, amatory, and satirical, would be acceptable. So, you don't think there's a Word's—worth of good poetry in the great L. B.! I daren't put the dreaded syllables at their just length, for my back tingles from the northern castigation. I send you the three letters, which I beg you to return along with those former letters (which I hope you are not going to print, by your detention). But don't be in a hurry to send them. When you come to town will do. Apropos of coming to town: Last Sunday was a fortnight, as I was *coming to town* from the Professor's, inspired with new rum, I tumbled down

and broke my nose. I drink nothing stronger than malt liquors.

I am going to change my lodgings, having received a hint that it would be agreeable, at our Lady's next feast. I have partly fixed upon most delectable rooms, which look out (when you stand a tip-toe) over the Thames and Surrey Hills; at the upper end of King's Bench Walks, in the Temple. There I shall have all the privacy of a house without the encumbrance, and shall be able to lock my friends out as often as I desire to hold free converse with my immortal mind; for my present lodgings resemble a minister's levee, I have so increased my acquaintance (as they call 'em) since I have resided in town. Like the country mouse, that had tasted a little of urbane manners, I long to be nibbling my own cheese by my dear self, without mouse-traps and time-traps. By my new plan, I shall be as airy, up four pair of stairs, as in the country; and in a garden, in the midst of enchanting (more than Mahometan paradise) London, whose dirtiest drab-frequented alley, and her lowest bowing tradesman, I would not exchange for Skiddaw, Helvellyn, James, Walter, and the parson into the bargain. O her lamps of a night! her rich goldsmiths, print-shops, toy-shops, mercers, hardwaremen, pastry-cooks, St Paul's Churchyard, the Strand, Exeter Change, Charing Cross, with the man *upon* a black horse! These are thy gods, O London! A'nt you mightily moped on the banks of the Cam? Had you not better come and set up here? You can't think what a difference. All the streets and pavements are pure gold, I warrant you. At least, I know an alchemy that turns her mud into that metal—a mind that loves to be at home in crowds.

'Tis half-past twelve o'clock, and all sober people ought to be a-bed. Between you and me the L. Ballads are but drowsy performances.

C. Lamb (as you may guess).

LXXXVIII. TO THE SAME

[After March 25, 1801.]

I was not aware that you owed me anything beside that guinea; but I dare say you are right. I live at No. 16, Mitre Court Buildings, a pistol-shot off Baron Maseres'. You must introduce me to the Baron. I think we should suit one another mainly. He lives on the ground floor, for convenience of the gout; I prefer the attic story, for the air. He keeps three footmen and two maids; I have neither maid nor laundress, not caring to be troubled with them. His forte, I understand, is the higher mathematics; my turn, I confess, is more to poetry and the belles lettres. The very antithesis of our characters would make up a harmony. You must bring the Baron and me together.—N.B. when you come to see me, mount up to the top of the stairs—I hope you are not asthmatical—and come in flannel, for 'tis pure airy up there. And bring your glass, and I will show you the Surrey Hills. My bed faces the river, so as by perking up upon my haunches, and supporting my carcass with my elbows, without much wrying my neck, I can see the white sails glide by the bottom of the King's Bench Walks as I lie in my bed. An excellent tiptoe prospect in the best room:—casement windows, with small panes, to look more like a cottage. Mind, I have got no bed for you, that's flat; sold it to pay expenses of moving,—the very bed on which Manning lay; the friendly, the mathematical Manning! How forcibly does it remind me of the interesting Otway! "The very bed which on thy marriage night gave thee into the arms of Belvidera, by the coarse hands of ruffians—" (upholsterers' men), &c. My tears will not give me leave to go on. But a bed I will get you, Manning, on condition you will be my day-guest.

I have been ill more than a month, with a bad cold,

which comes upon me (like a murderer's conscience) about midnight, and vexes me for many hours. I have successively been drugged with Spanish licorice, opium, ipecacuanha, paregoric, and tincture of foxglove (tinctura purpuræ digitalis of the ancients). I am afraid I must leave off drinking.

LXXXIX. TO ROBERT LLOYD

[April 16, 1801.]

Fletcher's Purple Island is a tedious Allegory of the Parts of the Human body. I would not advise you to lay out six *pence* upon it. It is not the work of Fletcher, the Coadjutor of Beaumont, but one Phineas a kinsman of his. If by the work of Bishop Taylor, whose title you have not given correctly, you mean his Contemplations on the State of Man in this Life and that which is to Come, I dare hope you will join with me in believing it to be spurious. The suspicious circumstance of its being a posthumous work, with the total dissimilarity in style to the genuine works, I think evince that it never was the work of Doctor Jeremy Taylor Late Lord Bishop of Down and Connor in Ireland and Administrator of the See of Dromore; such are the Titles which his sounding title pages give him, and I love the man, and I love his paraphernalia and I like to name him with all his attributions and additions. If you are yet but lightly acquainted with his real manner, take up and read the whole first chapter of the Holy *Dying*; in particular turn to the first paragraph of the 2 sect. of that chapter for a simile of a rose, or more truly many similes within simile, for such were the riches of his fancy, that when a beauteous image offered, before he could stay to expand it into all its capacities, throngs of new coming images came up, and justled out the first, or blended in disorder with it, which imitates the

order of every rapid mind. But read all the first chapter by my advice; and I know I need not advise you when you have to read it, to read the second. . . . Or for another specimen, (where so many beauties crowd, the judgment has yet vanity enough to think it can discern a handsomest, till a second judgment and a third ad infinitum start up to disallow their elder brother's pretensions) turn to the Story of the Ephesian Matron in the second section of the 5th Chapter of the same Holy *Dying* (I still refer to the *Dying* part, because it also contains better matter than the Holy Living, which deals more in rules than illustrations—I mean in comparison with the other only, else it has more and more beautiful illustrations than any prose book besides)—read it yourself and shew it to Plumstead (with my Love, and bid him write to me) and ask him if Willy himself has ever told a story with more circumstances of fancy and humour. The paragraph begins "But that which is to be faulted," and the story not long after follows.—Make these references, while P. is with you, that you may stir him up to the Love of Jeremy Taylor, and make a convertite of him. Coleridge was the man who first solemnly exhorted me to "study" the works of Dr Jeremy Taylor, and I have had reason to bless the hour in which he did it. Read as many of his works as you can get. I will assist you in getting them, when we go a stall hunting together in London, and its odds if we don't get a good Beaumt. and Fletcher cheap.—Bp. Taylor has more, and more beautiful imagery, and (what is more to a Lover of Willy) more knowledge and description of human life and manners, than any prose book in the language:—he has more delicacy and sweetness, than any mortal, the "gentle" Shakespear hardly excepted,—his similes and allusions are taken, as the bees take honey, from all the youngest, greenest, exquisitest parts of nature: from plants, and flowers, and fruit, young boys and virgins, from little children

perpetually, from sucking infants, babies' smiles, roses, gardens—his imagination was a spatious Garden where no vile insects could crawl in, his apprehension a "Court" where no foul thoughts kept "leets & holydays."—

> Snail and worm give no offence,
> Newt nor blind worm be not seen,
> Come not near our fairy queen.

You must read Bishop Taylor with allowances for the subjects on which he wrote, and the age *in* which. You may skip or patiently endure his tedious discourses on rites and ceremonies, Baptism and the Eucharist, the Clerical function, and the antiquity of Episcopacy, a good deal of which are inserted in works not purely controversial—his polemical works you may skip altogether, unless you have a taste for the exertions of vigorous reason and subtle distinguishing on uninteresting topics. Such of his works as you should begin with, to get a taste for him (after which your love will lead you to his Polemical and drier works as love led Leander "over boots" knee-deep thro' the Hellespont.) but read first the Holy Living and Dying, his Life of Christ, and Sermons, both in folio. And above all try to get a beautiful little tract on the Measures and offices of Friendship, printed with his *opuscula* duodecimo, and also at the end of his Polemical Discourses in folio. Another thing you will observe in Bp. Taylor, without which consideration you will do him injustice. He wrote to different classes of people. His Holy Living and Dying, and Life of Christ were designed, and have been used, as popular books of family Devotion, and have been thumbed by old women, and laid about in the window seats of old houses in great families, like the Bible, and the "Queene-like-Closet or rare boke of Recipes in medicine and cookery, fitted to all capacities." Accordingly, in these *the fancy* is perpetually applied to;

any slight conceit, allusion, or analogy; any prettiness; a story, true or false, serves for an argument, adapted to women and young persons and "incompetent judgments." Whereas the Liberty of Prophecy (a book in your father's bookcase) is a series of severe and masterly reasoning, fitted to great Clerks and learned Fathers, with no more of Fancy than is subordinate and ornamental. Such various powers had the Bishop of Down and Connor, Administrator of the See of Dromore. My theme and my story!—farewell—

C. LAMB.

XC. TO THOMAS MANNING

[? April] 1801.

Dear Manning,—I sent to Brown's immediately. Mr Brown (or Pijou, as he is called by the moderns) denied having received a letter from you. The one for you he remembered receiving, and remitting to Leadenhall Street; whither I immediately posted (it being the middle of dinner), my teeth unpicked. There I learned that if you want a letter set right, you must apply at the first door on the left hand before one o'clock. I returned and picked my teeth. And this morning I made my application in form, and have seen the vagabond letter, which most likely accompanies this. If it does not, I will get Rickman to name it to the Speaker, who will not fail to lay the matter before Parliament the next sessions, when you may be sure to have all the abuses in the Post Department rectified.

N.B.—There seems to be some informality epidemical. You direct your letters to me in Mitre Court: my true address is Mitre Court Buildings. By the pleasantries of Fortune, who likes a joke or a *double entendre* as well as the best of us her children, there happens to be another Mr Lamb (that there

should be two!!) in Mitre Court. His duns and girls frequently stumble up to me, and I am obliged to satisfy both in the best way I am able.

Farewell, and think upon it. C. L.

XCI. TO ROBERT LLOYD

[June 26, 1801.]

Cooke in Richard the Third is a perfect caricature. He gives you the *monster* Richard, but not the *man* Richard. Shakespear's bloody character impresses you with awe and deep admiration of his witty parts, his consummate hypocrisy, and indefatigable prosecution of purpose. You despise, detest, and loath the cunning, vulgar, low and fierce Richard, which Cooke substitutes in his place. He gives you no other idea, than of a vulgar villain, rejoycing in his being able to over reach, and not possessing that joy in *silent* consciousness, but betraying it like a *poor* villain in sneers and distortions of the face, like a droll at a country fair: not to add that cunning so self-betraying and manner so vulgar could never have deceived the politic Buckingham, nor the soft Lady Anne: *both*, bred in courts, would have turned with disgust from such a fellow. Not but Cooke has *powers*; but not of discrimination. His manner is strong, coarse and vigorous, and well adapted to some characters. But the lofty imagery and high sentiments and high passions of *Poetry* come black and prose-smoked from his prose lips.—I have not seen him in *Over-Reach*, but from what I remember of the character, I think he could not have chosen one more fit. I thought the play a highly finished one, when I read it sometime back. I *remember* a most noble image. Sir Giles drawing his sword in the last scene, says:

> Some undone widow sits upon mine arm,
> And takes away the use on't.

This is horribly fine, and I am not sure, that it did not suggest to me my conclusion of Pride's Cure; but my imitation is miserably inferior.

> This arm was busy in the day of Naseby:
> Tis paralytic now, and knows no use of weapons—

Pierre and Jaffier are the best things in Otway. Belvidere is a poor creature, and has had more than her due fame. Monimia is a little better, but she *whines*.—I like Calista in the Fair Penitent better than either of Otway's women. Lee's Massacre of Paris is a noble play, very chastely and finely written. His Alexander is full of that madness, "which rightly should possess a poet's brain." Œdipus is also a fine play, but less so than these two. It is a joint production of Lee and Dryden. All for Love begins with uncommon Spirit, but soon flags, and is of no worth upon the whole. The last scene of Young's Revenge is sublime: the rest of it not worth *id.*—I want to have your opinion and Plumstead's on Cooke's Richard the Third. I am possessed with an Admiration of the genuine Richard, his genius, and his mounting spirit, which no consideration of his cruelties can depress. Shakespear has not made Richard so black a monster, as is supposed. Wherever he is monstrous, it was to confirm to vulgar opinion. But he is generally a Man. Read his most exquisite address to the Widowed Queen, to court her daughter for him: the topics of maternal feeling, of a deep knowledge of the heart, are such as no monster could have supplied. Richard must have *felt*, before he could feign so well; tho' ambition choked the good seed. I think it the most finished piece of Eloquence in the world; of *persuasive* oratory, far above Demosthenes, Burke or any man—far exceeding the courtship of Lady Anne. *Her* relenting is barely natural, after all; the more perhaps S's merit to make *impossible* appear *probable*. But the *Queen's consent* (taking

in all the circumstances and topics, *private* and *public*; with his angelic address, able to draw the host of Lucifer,) is *probable*; and resisted it. This observation applies to many other parts. All the inconsistency is, that Shakespeare's better genius was forced to struggle against the prejudices, which made a monster of Richard. He set out to paint a *monster*; but his human sympathies produced a *man*.

Are you not tired with this *ingenious* criticism? I am.

God bless you

Richard itself is totally metamorphosed in the wretched *acting play* of that name, which you will see altered by *Cibber*.— (signature cut out)

XCII. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

June 29, 1801.

Dear Sir,—Doctor Christy's Brother and Sister are come to town, and have shown me great civilities. I in return wish to requite them, having, *by God's grace*, principles of generosity *implanted* (as the moralists say) in my nature, which have been duly cultivated and watered by good and religious friends, and a pious education. They have picked up in the northern parts of the island an astonishing admiration of the great author of the New Philosophy in England, and I have ventured to promise their taste an evening's gratification by seeing Mr Godwin *face* to *face*!!!!! Will you do them and me *in* them the pleasure of drinking tea and supping with me at the *old* number 16 on Friday or Saturday next? An early nomination of the day will very much oblige yours sincerely,

CH. LAMB.

XCIII. TO WALTER WILSON

August 14th, 1801.

Dear Wilson,— I am extremely sorry that any serious differences should subsist between us, on account of some foolish behaviour of mine at Richmond; you knew me well enough before, that a very little liquor will cause a considerable alteration in me.

I beg you to impute my conduct solely to that, and not to any deliberate intention of offending you, from whom I have received so many friendly attentions. I know that you think a very important difference in opinion with respect to some more serious subjects between us makes me a dangerous companion; but do not rashly infer, from some slight and light expressions which I may have made use of in a moment of levity, in your presence, without sufficient regard to your feelings—do not conclude that I am an inveterate enemy to all religion. I have had a time of seriousness, and I have known the importance and reality of a religious belief. Latterly, I acknowledge, much of my seriousness has gone off, whether from new company, or some other new associations; but I still retain at bottom a conviction of the truth, and a certainty of the usefulness of religion. I will not pretend to more gravity of feeling than I at present possess; my intention is not to persuade you that any great alteration is probable in me; sudden converts are superficial and transitory; I only want you to believe that I have *stamina* of seriousness within me, and that I desire nothing more than a return of that friendly intercourse which used to subsist between us, but which my folly has suspended.

Believe me, very affectionately yours,

C. Lamb.

XCIV. TO THOMAS MANNING

[August 1801.]

Dear Manning,—I have forborne writing so long, (and so have you for the matter of that,) until I am almost ashamed either to write or to forbear any longer. But as your silence may proceed from some worse cause than neglect—from illness, or some mishap which may have befallen you, I begin to be anxious. You may have been burnt out, or you may have married, or you may have broken a limb, or turned country parson: any of these would be excuse sufficient for not coming to my supper. I am not so unforgiving as the nobleman in Saint Mark. For me, nothing new has happened to me, unless that the poor *Albion* died last Saturday of the world's neglect, and with it the fountain of my puns is choked up for ever.

All the Lloyds wonder that you do not write to them. They apply to me for the cause. Relieve me from this weight of ignorance, and enable me to give a truly oracular response.

I have been confined some days with swelled cheek and rheumatism: they divide and govern me with a viceroy-headache in the middle. I can neither write nor read without great pain. It must be something like obstinacy that I choose this time to write to you in after many months' interruption.

I will close my letter of simple inquiry with an epigram on Mackintosh, the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*-man—who has got a place at last—one of the last I *did* for the Albion:—

> "Though thou'rt like Judas, an apostate black,
> In the resemblance one thing thou dost lack:
> When he had gotten his ill-purchased pelf,
> He went away, and wisely hang'd himself:
> This thou mayst do at last; yet much I doubt,
> If thou hast any *bowels* to gush out!"

Yours, as ever, C. Lamb.

XCV. TO THE SAME

Aug. 31, 1801.

I heard that you were going to China, with a commission from the Wedgwoods to collect hints for their pottery, and to teach the Chinese *perspective*; but I did not know that London lay in your way to Pekin. I am seriously glad of it, for I shall trouble you with a small present for the Emperor of Usbeck Tartary, as you go by his territories: it is a fragment of a "Dissertation on the state of political parties in England at the end of the eighteenth century," which will no doubt be very interesting to his Imperial Majesty. It was written originally in English for the use of the *two* and *twenty* readers of the *Albion*; (this *calculation* includes a printer, four pressmen, and a devil;) but becoming of no use, when the *Albion* stopped, I got it translated into Usbeck Tartar by my good friend Tibet Kulm, who is to come to London with a *civil* invitation from the Cham to the English nation to go over to the worship of the Lama.

The *Albion* is dead—dead as nail in door—and my revenues have died with it; but I am not as a man without hope. I have got a sort of opening to the *Morning Chronicle*, by means of that common dispenser of benevolence, Mister Dyer. I have not seen Perry, the editor, yet: but I am preparing a specimen. I shall have a difficult job to manage, for you must know that Mr Perry, in common with the great body of the Whigs, thinks the *Albion* very low. I find I must rise a peg or so, be a little more decent, and less abusive; for, to confess the truth, I had arrived to an abominable pitch; I spared neither age nor sex when my cue was given me. *N'importe*, (as they say in French,) any climate will suit me. So you are about to bring your old face-making face to London. You could not come in a better time for my purposes; for I have just lost Rickman, a faint idea of whose

character I sent you. He is gone to Ireland for a year or two, to make his fortune; and I have lost by his going what seems to me I can never recover—*a finished man*. His memory will be to me as the brazen serpent to the Israelites,—I shall look up to it, to keep me upright and honest. But he may yet bring back his honest face to England one day. I wish your affairs with the Emperor of China had not been *so urgent*, that you might have stayed in Great Britain a year or two longer, to have seen him; for, judging from *my own* experience, I almost dare pronounce you never saw his equal. I never saw a man that could be at all a second or substitute for him in any sort.

Imagine that what is here erased was an apology and explanation, perfectly satisfactory you may be sure for rating this man so highly at the expense of ——, and ——, and ——, and M——, and ——, and ——, and ——. But Mr Burke has explained this phenomenon of our nature very prettily in his letter to a Member of the National Assembly, or else in Appeal to the old Whigs, I forget which. Do you remember an instance from Homer, (who understood these matters tolerably well,) of Priam driving away his other sons with expressions of wrath and bitter reproach, when Hector was just dead?

I live where I did, in a *private* manner, because I don't like *state*. Nothing is so disagreeable to me as the clamours and applauses of the mob. For this reason I live in an *obscure* situation in one of the courts of the Temple. C. L.

I send you all of Coleridge's letters to me, which I have preserved: some of them are upon the subject of my play. I also send you Kemble's two letters, and the prompter's courteous epistle, with a curious critique on "Pride's Cure," by a young physician from EDINBRO', who modestly suggests quite another kind

of a plot. These are monuments of my disappointment which I like to preserve.

In Coleridge's letters you will find a good deal of amusement, to see genuine talent struggling against a pompous display of it. I also send you the Professor's letter to me (careful Professor! to conceal his *name* even from his correspondent), ere yet the Professor's pride was cured. Oh monstrous and almost satanical pride!

You will carefully keep all (except the Scotch Doctor's, *which burn*) *in statu quo*, till I come to claim mine own. C. LAMB.

XCVI. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

Sep. 9, 1801.

Dear Sir,—Nothing runs in my head when I think of your story, but that you should make it as like the life of Savage as possible. That is a known and familiar tale, and its effect on the public mind has been very great. Many of the incidents in the true history are readily made dramatical. For instance, Savage used to walk backwards and forwards o' nights to his mother's window, to catch a glimpse of her, as she passed with a candle. With some such situation the play might happily open. I would plunge my hero, exactly like Savage, into difficulties and embarrassments, the consequences of an unsettled mind: out of which he may be extricated by the unknown interference of his mother. He should be attended from the beginning by a friend, who should stand in much the same relation towards him as Horatio to Altamont in the play of the Fair Penitent. A character of this sort seems indispensable. This friend might gain interviews with the mother, when the son was refused sight of her. Like Horatio with Calista, he might wring his soul. Like Horatio, he might learn the secret *first*. He might be exactly in the same per-

plexing situation, when he had learned it, whether to tell it or conceal it from the Ton (I have still Savage in my head) might *kill* a man (as he did) in an affray —he should receive a pardon, as Savage did—and the mother might interfere to have him *banished*. This should provoke the Friend to demand an interview with her husband, and disclose the whole secret. The husband, refusing to believe anything to her dishonour, should fight with him. The husband repents before he dies. The mother explains, and confesses everything in his presence. The son is admitted to an interview with his now acknowledged mother. Instead of embraces, she resolves to abstract herself from all pleasure, even from his sight, in voluntary penance all her days after. This is crude indeed!! but I am totally unable to suggest a better. I am the worst hand in the world at a plot. But I understand enough of passion to predict that your story, with some of Savage's, which has no repugnance, but a natural alliance with it, cannot fail. The mystery of the suspected relationship—the suspicion, generated from slight and forgotten circumstances, coming at last to act as Instinct, and so to be mistaken for Instinct—the son's unceasing pursuit and throwing of himself in his mother's way, something like Falkland's eternal persecution of Williams—the high and intricate passion in the mother, the being obliged to shun and keep at a distance the thing nearest to her heart—to be cruel, where her heart yearns to be kind, without a possibility of explanation. You have the power of life and death and the hearts of your auditors in your hands—still Harris will want a skeleton, and he must have it. I can only put in some sorry hints. The discovery to the son's friend may take place not before the 3d act—in some such way as this. The mother may cross the street—he may point her out to some gay companion of his as the Beauty of Leghorn —the pattern for wives, &c. &c. His companion, who

is an Englishman, laughs at his mistake, and knows her to have been the famous Nancy Dawson, or any one else, who captivated the English king. Some such way seems dramatic, and speaks to the Eye. The audience will enter into the Friend's surprise, and into the perplexity of his situation. These Ocular Scenes are so many great landmarks, rememberable headlands and lighthouses in the voyage. Macbeth's witch has a good advice to a magic writer, what to do with his spectator.

"*Show* his *eyes*, and grieve his heart."

The most difficult thing seems to be, What to do with the husband? You will not make him jealous of his own son? that is a stale and an unpleasant trick in Douglas, &c. Can't you keep him out of the way till you want him, as the husband of Isabella is conveniently sent off till his cue comes? There will be story enough without him, and he will only puzzle all. Catastrophes are worst of all. Mine is most stupid. I only propose it to fulfil my engagement, not in hopes to convert you.

It is always difficult to get rid of a woman at the end of a tragedy. *Men* may fight and die. A woman must either take poison, *which is a nasty trick*, or go mad, which is not fit to be shown, or retire, which is poor, only retiring is most reputable.

I am sorry I can furnish you no better: but I find it extremely difficult to settle my thoughts upon anything but the scene before me, when I am from home, I am from home so seldom. If any, the least hint crosses me, I will write again, and I very much wish to read your plan, if you could abridge and send it. In this little scrawl you must take the will for the deed, for I most sincerely wish success to your play.—
Farewell, C. L.

XCVII. TO THE SAME

[A Fragment.—The second sheet of letter, endorsed by C. Lamb on the address as "only double."]

Margate, *Sept.* 17, 1801.

I shall be glad to come home and talk these matters with you. I have read your scheme very attentively. That Arabella has been mistress to King Charles, is sufficient to all the purposes of the story. It can only diminish that respect we feel for her to make her turn whore to one of the Lords of his Bedchamber. Her son must not know that she has been a whore: it matters not that she has been whore to a *King*: equally in both cases, it is against decorum and against the delicacy of a son's respect that he should be privy to it. No doubt, many sons might feel a wayward pleasure in the honourable guilt of their mothers, but is it a true feeling? Is it the best sort of feeling? Is it a feeling to be exposed on theatres to mothers and daughters? Your conclusion (or rather Defoe's) comes far short of the tragic ending, which is always expected, and it is not safe to disappoint. A tragic auditory wants *blood*. They care but little about a man and his wife parting. Besides, what will you do with the son, after all his pursuits and adventures? Even quietly leave him to take guinea-and-a-half lodgings with mama in Leghorn! O impotent and pacific measures! . . . I am certain that you must mix up some strong ingredients of distress to give a savour to your pottage. I still think that you may, and must, graft the story of Savage upon Defoe. Your hero must *kill* a *man* or *do some thing*. Can't you bring him to the gallows or some great mischief, out of which she *must* have recourse to an explanation with her husband to save him. Think on this. The husband,

for instance, has great friends in Court at Leghorn. The son is condemned to death. She cannot teaze him for a stranger. She must tell the whole truth. Or she *may* teaze him, as for a stranger, till (like Othello in Cassio's case) he begins to suspect her for her importunity. Or, being pardoned, can she not teaze her husband to get him banished? Something of this I suggested before. *Both* is best. The murder and the pardon will make business for the fourth act, and the banishment and explanation (by means of the *Friend* I want you to draw) the fifth. You must not open any of the truth to Dawley by means of a letter. A letter is a feeble messenger on the stage. Somebody, the son or his friend, must, as a *coup de main*, be exasperated, and obliged to tell the husband. Damn the husband and his "gentlemanlike qualities." Keep him out of sight, or he will trouble all. Let him be in England on trade, and come home as Biron does in Isabella, in the fourth act, when he is wanted. I am for introducing situations, sort of counterparts to situations, which have been tried in other plays—*like* but not the *same*. On this principle I recommended a friend like Horatio in the "Fair Penitent," and on this principle I recommend a situation like Othello, with relation to Desdemona's intercession for Cassio. By-scenes may likewise receive hints. The son may see his mother at a mask or feast, as Romeo, Juliet. The festivity of the company contrasts with the strong perturbations of the individuals. Dawley may be told his wife's past unchastity at a mask by some witch-character—as Macbeth upon the heath, in dark sentences. This may stir his brain, and be forgot, but come in aid of stronger proof hereafter. From this, what you will perhaps call whimsical way of counterparting, this honest stealing, and original mode of plagiarism, much yet, I think, remains to be sucked. Excuse these abortions. I

thought you would want the draught soon again, and I would not send it empty away.

Yours truly,

WILLIAM GODWIN!!!

Somers Town, 17*th Sept.* 1801.

XCVIII. TO ROBERT LLOYD

[1801.]

I am not dead nor asleep. But Manning is in town, and Coleridge is in town, and I am making a thorough alteration in the structure of my play for Publication. My brain is overwrought with variety of worldly-intercourse. I have neither time nor mind for scribbling. Who shall deliver me from the body of this Death?

Only continue to write and to believe that when the hour comes, I shall strike like Jack of the Clock, *id est*, I shall once more become a regular correspondent of Robert & Plumstead. How is the benevolent, loud talking Shakspere-loving, Brewer?

To your enquiry respecting a selection from B'p Taylor I answer—it cannot be done: and if it could, it would not *take* with John Bull. It cannot be done, for who can disentangle and unthread the rich texture of Nature and Poetry sewn so thick into a stout coat of theology, without spoiling both *lace* and *coat*? How beggarly and how bald do even Shakespeare's Princely Pieces look, when thus violently divorced from *connection* and *circumstance*. When we meet with "To be or not to be"—or Jacques's moralizings upon the Deer—or Brutus and Cassius' quarrel and reconciliation—in an Enfield Speaker or in Elegant Extracts—how we stare, and will scarcely acknowledge to ourselves (what we are conscious we feel) that they are flat and have no power. Something exactly like this have I experienced when I have picked out similes and stars from Holy Dying and shewn them *per se*, as you'd shew speci-

mens of minerals or pieces of rock. Compare the grand effect of the Star-paved firmament—and imagine a boy capable of picking out those pretty twinklers one by one and playing at chuck farthing with them. Everything in heaven and earth, in man and in story, in books and in fancy, acts by Confederacy, by juxtaposition, by circumstance and place. Consider a fine family —if I were not writing to you I might instance your own—of sons and daughters, with a respectable father and a handsome mother at their head, all met in one house, and happy round one table. Earth cannot show a more lovely and venerable sight, such as the Angels in heaven might lament that in their country there is no marrying or giving in marriage. Take and split this Body into individuals—shew the separate caprices, vagaries, etc., of Charles, Rob. or Plum.—one a quaker, another a churchman. The eldest daughter seeking a husband out of the pale of parental faith—another working perhaps—the father a prudent, circumspective, do-me-good sort of a man *blest* with children whom no ordinary rules can circumscribe—I have not room for all particulars—but just as this happy and venerable Body of a family loses by splitting and considering individuals too nicely, so it is when we pick out Best Bits out of a great writer. Tis the *sum* total of his mind which affects us. C. L.

CHAPTER II

NEWSPAPERS, TOBACCO AND COMPANY
JANUARY 1802—DECEMBER 1803

XCIX. TO THOMAS MANNING

Feb. 15th, 1802.

Apropos, I think you wrong about my play. All the omissions are right. And the supplementary scene, in which Sandford narrates the manner in which his master is affected, is the best in the book. It stands where a hodge-podge of German puerilities used to stand. I insist upon it that you like that scene. Love me, love that scene. I will now transcribe the "Londoner" (No. 1), and wind up all with affection and humble servant at the end.*

"What is all this about?" said Mrs Shandy. "A story of a cock and a bull," said Yorick: and so it is; but Manning will take good-naturedly what *God will send him* across the water: only I hope he won't *shut* his *eyes*, and *open* his *mouth*, as the children say, for that is the way to *gape*, and not to *read*. Manning, continue your laudible purpose of making me your register. I will render you back all your remarks; and *I, not you*, shall have received usury by having read them. In the mean time, may the great Spirit have you in his keeping, and preserve our Englishmen from the inoculation of frivolity and sin upon French earth.

Allons—or what is it you say, instead of *good-bye*?

Mary sends her kind remembrance, and covets the remarks equally with me. C. LAMB.

* Here was transcribed the essay called "The Londoner," which was published afterwards in the *Reflector*, and will be found in Vol. IV. of this Edition.—ED

C. TO MR RICKMAN

April 10th, 1802.

Dear Rickman,—The enclosed letter explains itself It will save me the danger of a corporal interview with the man-eater, who, if very sharp set, may take a fancy to me, if you will give me a short note, declaratory of probabilities. These from him who hopes to see you once or twice more before he goes hence, to be no more seen: for there is no tipple nor tobacco in the grave, whereunto he hasteneth.

C. Lamb.

16, *Mitre Court Buildings*,
Inner Temple.

How clearly the Goul writes, and like a gentleman!

CI. TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Sept. 8th, 1802.

Dear Coleridge,—I thought of not writing till we had performed some of our commissions; but we have been hindered from setting about them, which yet shall be done to a tittle. We got home very pleasantly on Sunday. Mary is a good deal fatigued, and finds the difference of going *to* a place, and coming *from* it. I feel that I shall remember your mountains to the last day I live. They haunt me perpetually. I am like a man who has been falling in love unknown to himself, which he finds out when he leaves the lady. I do not remember any very strong impression while they were present; but, being gone, their mementos are shelved in my brain. We passed a very pleasant little time with the Clarksons. The Wordsworths are at Montague's rooms, near neighbours to us. They dined with us yesterday, and I was their guide to Bartlemy Fair!

I shall put your Letter in the penny post, and shall always do so, if you have no objection, for I don't

want to see Stuart, our Dissolution was rather ambiguous and I am not sure he is not displeased. I was pleased to recognise your Blank verse Poem (the Picture) in the Morn Post of Monday. It reads very well and I feel some dignity in the notion of being able to understand it better than most Southern Readers.

I hope you got over the fatigue of Helvellin. I shall expect little notes now and then to accompany yours to Stuart, which will pay me for the pang I must feel! in defrauding the Company. Mind, if you think the Penny Post not safe or had otherwise rather I dropt 'em in myself, I will, but I hate to encounter that impudent clerk.

I yesterday hunted about at Lockington's, &c., for Milton's Prose Works, which if I could have got reasonably I should have beg'd your acceptance. The only one I met with, the best Quarto, was 6 guineas —But I don't despair.

Observe the Lam*be* (but don't mark it) on those letters I am not to open.

My next letter I hope will contain some account of your commissions.

I am hurrying this off at my office where I am got for the first time today, and very awkward I feel and strange at Business. I forget the names of Books and feel myself not half so great a man as when I [was a] scrambler among mountains. I feel debased. But I shall soon break in my mountain spirit.

Particularly tell me about little Pipos (or flying Opossum) the only child (but one) I had ever an inclination to steal from its parents. That one was a Beggar's brat that I might have had cheap. I hope his little thrash has gone.

But don't be jealous. I have a very affectionate memory of you all *veneres* Pi-pos: but *Pipos* I especially love.

Remember me kindly to Hartley and Hartley's old

friends at Greta Hall and very kindly to Sara. I may venture to add Mary's love, I am sure, tho' she does not sit beside me. Public offices scare away familiar faces and make ugly faces too familiar. Have you seen Stoddart and Allen. We past S. on the road. God bless you all. C. L.

CII. TO MRS GODWIN

[1802.]

Dear Mrs G.,—Having observed with some concern that Mr Godwin is a little fastidious in what he eats for supper, I herewith beg to present his palate with a piece of dried salmon. I am assured it is the best that swims in Trent. If you do not know how to dress it, allow me to add, that it should be cut in thin slices and boiled in paper *previously prepared in butter*. Wishing it exquisite, I remain,—Much as before, yours sincerely, C. LAMB.

Some add *mashed potatoes*.

CIII. TO THOMAS MANNING

24th Sept. 1802, London.

My dear Manning,—Since the date of my last letter I have been a traveller. A strong desire seized me of visiting remote regions. My first impulse was to go and see Paris. It was a trivial objection to my aspiring mind, that I did not understand a word of the language, since I certainly intend some time in my life to see Paris, and equally certainly intend never to learn the language; therefore that could be no objection. However, I am very glad I did not go, because you had left Paris (I see) before I could have set out. I believe, Stoddart promising to go with me another year, prevented that plan. My next scheme (for to my restless, ambitious mind London was become a bed of thorns) was to visit the

far-famed peak in Derbyshire, where the Devil sits, they say, without breeches. *This* my purer mind rejected as indelicate. And my final resolve was, a tour to the Lakes. I set out with Mary to Keswick, without giving Coleridge any notice, for my time, being precious, did not admit of it. He received us with all the hospitality in the world, and gave up his time to show us all the wonders of the country. He dwells upon a small hill by the side of Keswick, in a comfortable house, quite enveloped on all sides by a net of mountains: great floundering bears and monsters they seemed, all couchant and asleep. We got in in the evening, travelling in a post-chaise from Penrith, in the midst of a gorgeous sunshine, which transmuted all the mountains into colours, purple, &c., &c. We thought we had got into fairy-land. But that went off, (as it never came again; while we stayed we had no more fine sunsets;) and we entered Coleridge's comfortable study just in the dusk, when the mountains were all dark with clouds upon their heads. Such an impression I never received from objects of sight before, nor do I suppose I can ever again. Glorious creatures, fine old fellows, Skiddaw, &c. I never shall forget ye, how ye lay about that night, like an intrenchment; gone to bed, as it seemed for the night, but promising that ye were to be seen in the morning. Coleridge had got a blazing fire in his study; which is a large antique, ill-shaped room, with an old-fashioned organ, never played upon, big enough for a church, shelves of scattered folios, an Æolian harp, and an old sofa, half bed, &c. And all looking out upon the last fading view of Skiddaw, and his broad-breasted brethren: what a night! Here we stayed three full weeks, in which time I visited Wordsworth's cottage, where we stayed a day or two with the Clarksons, (good people, and most hospitable, at whose house we tarried one day and night,) and saw Lloyd. The Wordsworths

were gone to Calais. They have since been in London, and past much time with us: he is now gone into Yorkshire to be married. So we have seen Keswick, Grasmere, Ambleside, Ulswater, (where the Clarksons live,) and a place at the other end of Ulswater; I forget the name: to which we travelled on a very sultry day, over the middle of Helvellyn. We have clambered up to the top of Skiddaw, and I have waded up the bed of Lodore. In fine, I have satisfied myself that there is such a thing as that which tourists call *romantic*, which I very much suspected before: they make such a spluttering about it, and toss their splendid epithets around them, till they give as dim a light as at four o'clock next morning the lamps do after an illumination. Mary was excessively tired when she got about half-way up Skiddaw, but we came to a cold rill, (than which nothing can be imagined more cold, running over cold stones,) and with the reinforcement of a draught of cold water she surmounted it most manfully. Oh, its fine black head, and the bleak air atop of it, with a prospect of mountains all about and about, making you giddy; and then Scotland afar off, and the border countries so famous in song and ballad! It was a day that will stand out, like a mountain, I am sure, in my life. But I am returned, (I have now been come home near three weeks; I was a month out,) and you cannot conceive the degradation I felt at first, from being accustomed to wander free as air among mountains, and bathe in rivers without being controlled by any one, to come home and *work*. I felt very *little*. I had been dreaming I was a very great man. But that is going off, and I find I shall conform in time to that state of life to which it has pleased God to call me. Besides, after all, Fleet Street and the Strand are better places to live in for good and all than amidst Skiddaw. Still, I turn back to those great places where I wandered about,

participating in their greatness. After all, I could not *live* in Skiddaw. I could spend a year, two, three years among them, but I must have a prospect of seeing Fleet Street at the end of that time, or I should mope and pine away, I know. Still, Skiddaw is a fine creature. My habits are changing, I think, *i.e.* from drunk to sober. Whether I shall be happier or not remains to be proved. I shall certainly be more happy in a morning; but whether I shall not sacrifice the fat, and the marrow, and the kidneys, *i.e.* the night, glorious care-drowning night, that heals all our wrongs, pours wine into our mortifications, changes the scene from indifferent and flat to bright and brilliant! O Manning, if I should have formed a diabolical resolution, by the time you come to England, of not admitting any spirituous liquors into my house, will you be my guest on such shameworthy terms? Is life, with such limitations, worth trying? The truth is, that my liquors bring a nest of friendly harpies about my house, who consume me. This is a pitiful tale to be read at St Gothard, but it is just now nearest my heart. Fenwick is a ruined man. He is hiding himself from his creditors, and has sent his wife and children into the country. Fell, my other drunken companion, (that has been: *nam hic cæstus artemque repono,*) is turned editor of a Naval Chronicle. Godwin continues a steady friend, though the same facility does not remain of visiting him often. That . . . . . has detached Marshall from his house; Marshall, the man who went to sleep when the "Ancient Mariner" was reading; the old, steady, unalterable friend of the Professor. Holcroft is not yet come to town. I expect to see him, and will deliver your message. Things come crowding in to say, and no room for 'em. Some things are too little to be told, *i.e.* to have a preference; some are too big and circumstantial. Thanks for yours, which was most delicious.

Would I had been with you, benighted, &c! I fear my head is turned with wandering. I shall never be the same acquiescent being. Farewell. Write again quickly, for I shall not like to hazard a letter, not knowing where the fates have carried you. Farewell, my dear fellow. C. LAMB.

Oct. 9th, 1802.

CIV. CAROLUS AGNUS COLERIDGIO SUO S.

Carissime,—Scribis, ut nummos scilicet epistolarios solvam et postremo in Tartara abeam: immo tu potius Tartaricum (ut aiunt) deprehendisti, qui me vernaculâ meâ linguâ pro scribâ conductitio per tot annos satis eleganter usum ad Latinè impure et canino fere ore latrandum per tuasmet epistolas benè compositas et concinnatas percellere studueris. Conabor tamen: Attamen vereor, ut Ædes istas nostri Christi, inter quas tantâ diligentiâ magistri improbâ bonis literulis, quasi per clysterem quendam injectis, infrà supràque olim penitùs imbutus fui, Barnesii et Marklandii doctissimorum virorum nominibus adhuc gaudentes, barbarismis meis peregrinis et aliunde quæsitis valde dehonestavero. Sed pergere quocunque placet. Adeste agitur, quotquot estis, conjugationum declinationumve turmæ, terribilia spectra, et tu imprimis ades, Umbra et Imago maxima obsoletæ (Diis gratiæ) Virgæ, quâ novissime in mentem receptâ, horrescunt subito natales, et parum deest quo minùs braccas meas ultro usque ad crura demittam, et ipse puer pueriliter ejulem.

Ista tua Carmina Chamouniana satis grandia esse mihi constat; sed hoc mihi nonnihil displicet, quòd in iis illæ montium Grisosonum inter se responsiones totidem roboant anglicè, *God, God*, haud aliter atque temet audivi tuas montes Cumbrianas resonare do-

centes, *Tod, Tod*, nempe Doctorem infelicem: vocem certe haud Deum Sonantem. Pro cæteris plaudo.

Itidem comparationes istas tuas satis callidas et lepidas certè novi: sed quid hoc ad verum? cum illi Consulari viro et *mentem irritabilem* istum Julianum: et etiam *astutias frigidulas* quasdem Augusto propriores, nequaquam congruenter uno afflatu comparationis causâ insedisse affirmaveris: necnon nescio quid similitudinis etiam cum Tiberio tertio in loco solicite produxeris. Quid tibi equidem cum uno vel altero Cæsare, cùm universi Duodecim ad comparationes tuas se ultro tulerint? Præterea, vetustati adnutans, comparationes iniquas odi.

Istas Wordsworthianas nuptias (vel potius cujusdam *Edmundii* tui) te retulisse mirificum gaudeo. Valeas, Maria, fortunata nimium, et antiquæ illæ Mariæ Virgini (comparatione plusquam Cæsareanâ) forsitan comparanda, quoniam 'beata inter mulieres': et etiam fortasse Wordsworthium ipsum tuum maritum Angelo Salutatori æquare fas erit, quoniam e Cœlo (ut ille) descendunt et Musæ et ipse Musicolæ: at Wordsworthium Musarum observantissimum semper novi. Necnon te quoque affinitate hâc novâ, Dorothea, gratulor: et tu certe alterum *donum Dei*.

Istum Ludum, quem tu, Coleridgi, Americanum garris, a Ludo (ut Ludi sunt) maximè abhorrentem prætereo: nempe quid ad Ludum attinet, totius illæ gentis Columbianæ, a nostrâ gente, eadem stirpe ortâ ludi singuli causa voluntatem perperam alienare? Quæso ego materiam ludi: tu Bella ingeris.

Denique valeas, et quid de Latinitate meâ putes, dicas: facias ut opossum illum nostrum volantem vel (ut tu malis) quendam Piscem errabundum, a me salvum et pulcherrimum esse jubeas. Valeant uxor tua cum Hartleiio nostro. Soror mea salva est et ego: vos et ipsa salvere jubet. Ulterius progrediri non liquet: homo sum æratus.

P.S. Pene mihi exciderat, apud me esse Librorum

a Johanno Miltono Latinè scriptorum volumina duo, quæ (Deo volente) cum cæteris tuis libris ocyùs citiùs per Maria ad te missura curabo; sed me in hoc tali genere rerum nullo modo *festinantem* novisti: habes confitentem reum. Hoc solum dici restat, prædicta volumina pulchra esse et omnia opera Latina J. M. in se continere. Circa defensionem istam Pro Pop°. Ang°. acerrimam in præsens ipse præclaro gaudio moror.

Jussa tua Stuartina faciam ut diligenter colam.
Iterum iterumque valeas:
Et facias memor sis nostri.

CV. TO THE SAME

Oct. 11th, 1802.

Dear Coleridge,—Your offer about the German poems is exceedingly kind; but I do not think it a wise speculation, because the time it would take you to put them into prose would be nearly as great as if you versified them. Indeed I am sure you could do the one nearly as soon as the other; so that instead of a division of labour, it would be only a multiplication. But I will think of your offer in another light. I dare say I could find many things, of a light nature, to suit that paper, which you would not object to pass upon Stuart as your own, and I should come in for some light profits, and Stuart think the more highly of your assiduity. "Bishop Hall's Characters" I know nothing about, having never seen them. I will reconsider your offer, which is very plausible; but as to the drudgery of going every day to an editor with my scraps, like a pedler, for him to pick out and tumble about my ribbons and posies, and to wait in his lobby, &c., no money could make up for the degradation. You are in too high request with him to have any thing unpleasant of that sort to submit to.

It was quite a slip of my pen, in my Latin letter, when I told you I had Milton's Latin Works. I ought to have said his Prose Works, in two volumes, Birck's edition, containing all, both Latin and English, a fuller and better edition than Lloyd's of Toland. It is completely at your service, and you must accept it from me; at the same time I shall be much obliged to you for your Latin Milton, which you think you have at Howitt's; it will leave me nothing to wish for but the *History of England*, which I shall soon pick up for a trifle. But you must write me word whether the Miltons are worth paying carriage for. You have a Milton; but it is pleasanter to eat one's own pease out of one's own garden, than to buy them by the peck at Covent Garden; and a book reads the better, which is our own, and has been so long known to us, that we know the topography of its blots, and dog's-ears, and can trace the dirt in it to having read it at tea with buttered muffins, or over a pipe, which I think is the maximum. But, Coleridge, you must accept these little things, and not think of returning money for them, for I do not set up for a factor or general agent. As for the fantastic debt of £15, I'll think you were dreaming, and not trouble myself seriously to attend to you. My bad Latin you properly correct; but *natales* for *nates* was an inadvertency: I knew better. *Progrediri*, or *progredi*, I thought indifferent, my authority being Ainsworth. However, as I have got a fit of Latin, you will now and then indulge me with an *epistola*. I pay the postage of this, and propose doing it by turns. In that case I can now and then write to you without remorse; not that you would mind the money, but you have not always ready cash to answer small demands, the *epistolarii nummi*.

Your "Epigram on the Sun and Moon in Germany" is admirable. Take 'em all together, they are as good as Harrington's. I will muster up all the conceits I

can, and you shall have a packet some day. You and I together can answer all demands surely: you, mounted on a terrible charger, (like Homer, in the Battle of the Books,) at the head of the cavalry: I will lead the light horse. I have just heard from Stoddart. Allen and he intend taking Keswick in their way home. Allen wished particularly to have it a secret that he is in Scotland, and wrote to me accordingly very urgently. As luck was, I had told not above three or four; but Mary had told Mrs Green, of Christ's Hospital! For the present, farewell: never forgetting love to Pipos and his friends. C. LAMB.

CVI. TO THE SAME

October 23, 1802.

Your kind offer I will not a second time refuse. You shall send me a packet, and I will do them into English with great care. Is not there one about William Tell, and would not that in the present state of discussions be likely to *tell*? The Epigrams I meant are to be found at the end of Harrington's Translation of *Orlando Furioso*: if you could get the book they would some of them answer your purpose to modernize. If you can't, I fancy I can. Baxter's *Holy Commonwealth* I have luckily met with, and when I have sent it you shall if you please consider yourself indebted to me 3/6, the cost of it: especially as I purchased it after your solemn injunctions.

The plain case with regard to my presents, (which you seem so to shrink from) is that I have not at all affected the character of a Donor, or thought of violating your sacred law of Give and Take: but I have been *taking* and partaking the good things of your House (when I know you were not over-abounding) and I now *give* unto you of mine: and by the grace

of God I happen to be myself a little super-abundant at present. I expect I shall be able to send you my final parcel in about a week; by that time I shall have gone through all Milton's Latin works. There will come with it the *Holy Commonwealth*, and the identical North American Bible which you helped to dogs-ear at Christ's. I called at Howells for your little Milton, and also to fetch away the White Cross Sheets Library Books, which I have not forgot: but your books were not in a state to be got at then, and Mrs H. is to let me know when she packs up. They will be sent by sea; and my little precursor will come to you by the Whitehaven Waggon, accompanied with pens, penknife, &c. Mrs Howell was as usual very civil; and asked with great earnestness if it were likely you would come to town in the winter—she has a friendly eye upon you.

I read daily your political essays. I was particularly pleased with "Once a Jacobin": though the argument is obvious enough, the style was less swelling than your things sometimes are, and it was plausible *ad populum*. A vessel has just arrived from Jamaica with the news of poor Sam Le Grice's death. He died at Jamaica of the yellow fever. His course was rapid, and he had been very foolish; but I believe there was more of kindness and warmth in him than in almost any other of our schoolfellows. The annual meeting of the Blues is to-morrow, at the London Tavern, where poor Sammy dined with them two years ago, and attracted the notice of all by the singular foppishness of his dress. When men go off the stage so early, it scarce seems a noticeable thing in their epitaphs, whether they had been wise or silly in their lifetime.

I am glad the snuff and Pi-pos's books please. "Goody Two Shoes" is almost out of print. Mrs Barbauld's stuff has banished all the old classics of the nursery; and the shopman at Newberry's hardly

deigned to reach them off an old exploded corner of a shelf, when Mary asked for them. Mrs Barbauld's, and Mrs Trimmer's nonsense lay in piles about. Knowledge insignificant and vapid as Mrs Barbauld's books convey, it seems, must come to a child in the *shape* of *knowledge*; and his empty noddle must be turned with conceit of his own powers when he has learnt that a horse is an animal, and Billy is better than a horse, and such like; instead of that beautiful interest in wild tales, which made the child a man, while all the time he suspected himself to be no bigger than a child. Science has succeeded to poetry no less in the little walks of children than with men. Is there no possibility of averting this sore evil? Think what you would have been now, if instead of being fed with tales and old wives' fables in childhood, you had been crammed with geography and natural history!

Hang them!—I mean the cursed Barbauld crew, those blights and blasts of all that is human in man and child.

As to the translations, let me do two or three hundred lines, and then do you try the nostrums upon Stuart in any way you please. If they go down, I will bray more. In fact, if I got or could but get £50 a year only, in addition to what I have, I should live in affluence.

Have you anticipated it, or could you not give a parallel of Buonaparte with Cromwell, particularly as to the contrast in their deeds affecting *foreign* States? Cromwell's interference for the Albigenses, Buonaparte's against the Swiss. Then religion would come in; and Milton and you could rant about our countrymen of that period. This is a hasty suggestion, the more hasty because I want my supper. I have just finished Chapman's Homer. Did you ever read it? it has the continuous power of interesting you all along, like a rapid original, more than any; and

in the uncommon excellence of the more finished parts goes beyond Fairfax or any of 'em. The metre is fourteen syllables, and capable of all sweetness and grandeur. Cowper's blank verse detains you every step with some heavy Miltonism; Chapman gallops off with you his own free pace. Take a simile for example. The council breaks up—

"Being abroad, the earth was overlaid
With flockers to them, that came forth; as when of frequent bees
Swarms rise out of a hollow rock, repairing the degrees
Of their egression endlessly, with ever rising new
From forth their sweet nest; as their store, still as it faded, grew,
And never would cease sending forth clusters to the spring,
They still crowd out so; this flock here, that there, belabouring
The loaded flowers. So," &c., &c.

What *endless egression of phrases* the dog commands!

Take another, Agamemnon wounded, bearing his wound heroically for the sake of the army (look below) to a woman in labour.

"He, with his lance, sword, mighty stones, pour'd his heroic wreak
On other squadrons of the foe, whiles yet warm bloom did break
Thro' his cleft veins; but when the wound was quite exhaust and crude,
The eager anguish did approve his princely fortitude.
As when most sharp and bitter pangs distract a labouring dame,
Which the divine Ilithiæ, that rule the painful frame
Of human childbirth, pour on her; the Ilithiæ that are
The daughters of Saturnia; with whose extreme repair
The woman strives to take the worst it gives;
With thought, it *must be, 'tis love's fruit, the end for which she lives;*
The mean to make herself new born, what comforts will redound:
So," &c.

I will tell you more about Chapman and his peculiarities in my next. I am much interested in him.

Yours ever affectionately, and Pi-Pos's.

C. L.

CVII. TO THE SAME

Nov. 4th, 1802.

Observe, there comes to you, by the Kendal waggon to-morrow, the illustrious 5th of November, a box, containing the Miltons, the strange American Bible, with White's brief note, to which you will attend: *Baxter's Holy Commonwealth*, for which you stand indebted to me 3s. 6d.; an odd volume of Montaigne, being of no use to me, I having the whole; certain books belonging to Wordsworth, as do also the strange thick-hoofed shoes, which are very much admired in London. All these sundries I commend to your most strenuous looking after. If you find the Miltons in certain parts dirtied and soiled with a crumb of right Gloucester, blacked in the candle, (my usual supper,) or peradventure a stray ash of tobacco wafted into the crevices, look to that passage more especially: depend upon it, it contains good matter. I have got your little Milton, which, as it contains "Salmasius," and I make a rule of never hearing but one side of the questions, (why should I distract myself?) I shall return to you when I pick up the *Latina opera*. The first Defence is the greatest work among them, because it is uniformly great, and such as is befitting the very mouth of a great nation, speaking for itself. But the second Defence, which is but a succession of splendid episodes, slightly tied together, has one passage, which, if you have not read, I conjure you to lose no time, but read it: it is his consolations in his blindness, which had been made a reproach to him. It begins whimsically, with poetical flourishes about Tiresias and other blind worthies, (which still are mainly interesting as displaying his singular mind, and in what degree poetry entered into his daily soul, not by fits and impulses, but engrained and innate,) but the concluding page, *i.e.* of *this passage*, (not of the *Defensio*,) which you

will easily find, divested of all brags and flourishes, gives so rational, so true an enumeration of his comforts, so human, that it cannot be read without the deepest interest. Take one touch of the religious part:—"Et sane haud ultima Dei cura cæci—*we blind folks*, I understand it; not *nos* for *ego*)—sumus; qui nos, quominus quicquam aliud præter ipsum cernere valemus, eo clementius atque benignius respicere dignatur. Væ qui illudit nos, væ qui lædit, execratione publica devovendo; nos ab injuriis hominum non modo incolumes, sed pene sacros divina lex reddidit, divinus favor: nec tam *oculorum hebetudine* quam *cœlestium alarum umbrâ* has nobis fecisse tenebras videtur, factas illustrare rursus interiore ac longe præstabiliore lumine haud raro solet. Huc refero, quod et amici officiosius nunc etiam quam solebant, colunt, observant, adsunt; quod et nonnulli sunt, quibuscum Pyladeas atque Theseas alternare voces verorum amicorum liceat,

> "Vade gubernaculum mei pedis.
> Da manum ministro amico
> Da collo manum tuam, ductor autem viæ ero tibi ego."

All this, and much more, is highly pleasing to know. But you may easily find it; and I don't know why I put down so many words about it but for the pleasure of writing to you, and the want of another topic.

Yours ever, C. Lamb.

To-morrow I expect with anxiety S. T. C.'s letter to Mr Fox.

CVIII. TO THOMAS MANNING

[? November] 1802.

My dear Manning,—I must positively write, or I shall miss you at Toulouse. I sit here like a decayed minute-hand; (I lie: *that* does not *sit*;) and being myself the exponent of no time, take no heed how

the clocks about me are going. You possibly by this time may have explored all Italy, and toppled, unawares, into Etna, while you went too near those rotten-jawed, gap-toothed, old worn-out chaps of hell, —while I am meditating a quiescent letter to the honest post-master of Toulouse. But in case you should not have been *felo de se*, this is to tell you, that your letter was quite to my palate: in particular your just remarks upon Industry, cursed Industry, (though indeed you left me to explore the reason,) were highly relishing. I have often wished I had lived in the golden age, when shepherds lay stretched upon flowers, and roused themselves at their leisure, —the genius there is in a man's natural idle face, that has not learned his multiplication table! before doubt, and propositions, and corollaries, got into the world!

Now, as Joseph Cottle, a Bard of Nature, sings, going up Malvern Hills,

> "How steep! how painful the ascent!
> It needs the evidence of *close deduction*
> To know that ever I shall gain the top."

You must know that Joe is lame, so that he had some reason for so singing. These two lines, I assure you, are taken *totidem literis* from a very *popular* poem. Joe is also an Epic Poet as well as a Descriptive, and has written a tragedy, though both his drama and epopoiea are strictly *descriptive*, and chiefly of the *Beauties of Nature*, for Joe thinks *man* with all his passions and frailties not a proper subject of the *Drama*. Joe's tragedy hath the following surpassing speech in it. Some king is told that his enemy has engaged twelve archers to come over in a boat from an enemy's country and way-lay him; he thereupon pathetically exclaims—

> "*Twelve*, dost thou say? Curse on those dozen villains!"

Cottle read two or three acts out to us, very gravely on both sides till he came to this heroic touch,—and

then he asked what we laughed at? I had no more muscles that day. A poet that chooses to read out his own verses has but a limited power over you. There is a bound where his authority ceases.

CIX. TO THE SAME

[1803.]

Not a sentence, not a syllable of Trismegistus shall be lost through my neglect. I am his word-banker, his store keeper of puns and syllogisms. You cannot conceive (and if Trismegistus cannot, no man can) the strange joy which I felt at the receipt of a letter from Paris. It seemed to give me a learned importance, which placed me above all who had not Parisian correspondents. Believe that I shall carefully husband every scrap, which will save you the trouble of memory, when you come back. You cannot write things so trifling, let them only be about Paris, which I shall not treasure. In particular, I must have parallels of actors and actresses. I must be told if any building in Paris is at all comparable to St Paul's, which, contrary to the usual mode of that part of our nature called admiration, I have looked up to with unfading wonder, every morning at ten o'clock, ever since it has lain in my way to business. At noon I casually glance upon it, being hungry; and hunger has not much taste for the fine arts. Is any night-walk comparable to a walk from St Paul's to Charing Cross, for lighting and paving, crowds going and coming without respite, the rattle of coaches, and the cheerfulness of shops? Have you seen a man guillotined yet? Is it as good as hanging? Are the women *all* painted, and the men *all* monkeys? or are there not a *few* that look like *rational* of *both sexes*? Are you and the first consul *thick*? All this expense of ink I may fairly put you to, as your letters will not be solely for my proper pleasure; but are to serve as memoranda

and notices, helps for short memory, a kind of Rumfordising recollection, for yourself on your return. Your letter was just what a letter should be, crammed, and very funny. Every part of it pleased me till you came to Paris; then your philosophical indolence, or indifference, stung me. You cannot stir from your rooms till you know the language! What the devil are men nothing but word-trumpets? Are men all tongue and ear? Have these creatures, that you and I profess to know *something about*, no faces, gestures, gabble, no folly, no absurdity, no induction of French education upon the abstract idea of men and women, no similitude nor dissimilitude to English! Why, thou cursed Smellfungus! your account of your landing and reception, and Bullen, (I forget how you spell it, it was spelt my way in Harry the Eighth's time,) was exactly in that minute style which strong impressions INSPIRE, (writing to a Frenchman, I write as a Frenchman would.) It appears to me as if I should die with joy at the first landing in a foreign country. It is the nearest pleasure which a grown man can substitute for that unknown one, which he can never know, the pleasure of the first entrance into life from the womb. I dare say, in a short time, my habits would come back like a "stronger man" armed, and drive out that new pleasure; and I should soon sicken for known objects. Nothing has transpired here that seems to me of sufficient importance to send dry-shod over the water: but I suppose you will want to be told some news. The best and the worst to me is, that I have given up two guineas a-week at the *Post*, and regained my health and spirits, which were upon the wane. I grew sick, and Stuart unsatisfied. *Ludisti satis, tempus abire est*; I must cut closer, that's all. Mister Fell, or as you, with your usual facetiousness and drollery, call him, Mr F+ll has stopped short in the middle of his play. Some *friend* has told him

that it has not the least merit in it. Oh that I had the rectifying of the Litany! I would put in a *libera nos* (*Scriptores videlicet*) *ab amicis*! That's all the news. *Apropos*: is it pedantry, writing to a Frenchman, to express myself sometimes by a French word, when an English one would not do as well? Methinks my thoughts fall naturally into it.

In all this time I have done but one thing, which I reckon tolerable, and that I will transcribe, because it may give you pleasure, being a picture of *my* humours. You will find it in my last page. It absurdly is a first Number of a series, thus strangled in embryo.

More news! The Professor's Rib has come out to be a disagreeable woman, so much so as to drive me and some more old cronies from his house. He must not wonder if people are shy of coming to see him because of the "snakes." C. L.

CX. TO THE SAME

19th Feb., 1803, London.

My dear Manning,—The general scope of your letter afforded no indications of insanity, but some particular points raised a scruple. For God's sake don't think any more of "Independent Tartary." What are you to do among such Ethiopians? Is there no *lineal descendant* of Prester John?

Is the chair empty? Is the sword unswayed?—depend upon't they'll never make you their king, as long as any branch of that great stock is remaining. I tremble for your Christianity. They *will* certainly circumcise you. Read Sir John Maundevil's travels to cure you, or come over to England. There is a Tartar-man now exhibiting at Exeter Change. Come and talk with him, and hear what he says first. Indeed, he is no very favorable specimen of his Countrymen! But perhaps the best thing you can

do, is to *try* to get the idea out of your head. For this purpose repeat to yourself every night, after you have said your prayers, the words Independent Tartary, Independent Tartary, two or three times, and associate with them the *idea of oblivion* ('tis Hartley's method with obstinate memories), or say, Independent, Independent, have I not already got an *Independence*? That was a clever way of the old puritans —pun-divinity. My dear friend, think what a sad pity it would be to bury such *parts* in heathen countries, among nasty, unconversable, horse-belching, Tartar people! Some say, they are Cannibals; and then conceive a Tartar-fellow *eating* my friend, and adding the *cool malignity* of mustard and vinegar! I am afraid 'tis the reading of Chaucer has misled you; his foolish stories about Cambuscan and the ring, and the horse of brass. Believe me, there's no such thing, 'tis all the poet's *invention*; but if there were such *darling* things as old Chaucer sings, I would *up* behind you on the Horse of Brass, and frisk off for Prester John's Country. But these are all tales; a Horse of Brass never flew, and a King's daughter never talked with Birds! The Tartars, really, are a cold, insipid, smouchey set. You'll be sadly moped, (if you are not eaten) among them. Pray *try* and cure yourself. Take Helebore (the counsel is Horace's, 'twas none of my thought *originally*). Shave yourself oftener. Eat no saffron, for saffron-eaters contract a terrible Tartar-like yellow. Pray, to avoid the fiend. Eat nothing that gives the heart-burn. *Shave the upper lip.* Go about like an European. Read no books of voyages (they're nothing but lies): only now and then a Romance, to keep the fancy *under*. Above all, don't go to any sights of *wild beasts*. *That has been your ruin.* Accustom yourself to write familiar letters on common subjects to your friends in England, such as are of a moderate understanding. And think about common things more. There's your friend

Holcroft now, has written a play. You used to be fond of the drama. Nobody went to see it. Notwithstanding this, with an audacity perfectly original, he faces the town down in a preface, that they *did like* it very much. I have heard a waspish punster say, "Sir, why do you not laugh at my jest?" But for a man boldly to face me out with, "Sir, I maintain it, you did laugh at my jest," is a little too much. I have seen H. but once. He spoke of you to me in honourable terms. H. seems to me to be drearily dull. Godwin is dull, but then he has a dash of affectation, which smacks of the coxcomb, and your coxcombs are always agreeable. I supped last night with Rickman, and met a merry *natural* captain, who pleases himself vastly with once having made a Pun at Otaheite in the O. language. 'Tis the same man who said Shakspeare he liked, because he was so *much of the Gentleman*. Rickman is a man "absolute in all numbers." I think I may one day bring you acquainted, if you do not go to Tartary first; for you'll never come back. Have a care, my dear friend, of Anthropophagi! their stomachs are always craving. But if you do go among [them], pray contrive to *think* as soon as you can that you may hang on hand at the Butcher's. 'Tis terrible to be weighed out for 5d. a-pound. To sit at table (the reverse of fishes in Holland), not as a guest, but as a meat.

God bless you: do come to England. Air and exercise may do great things. Talk with some Minister. Why not your father?

God dispose all for the best. I have discharged my duty.

Your sincere friend,

C. Lamb.

[*Endorsed*] Mr Manning,
Hotel de Paris,
Rue de la Loi, à Paris.

CXI. TO THOMAS MANNING

[March, 1803.]

Dear Manning,—I send you some verses I have made on the death of a young Quaker you may have heard me speak of as being in love with for some years while I lived at Pentonville, though I had never spoken to her in my life. She died about a month since. If you have interest with the Abbé de Lisle, you may get 'em translated; he has done as much for the Georgics.

CXII. TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

March 20, 1803.

Mary sends love from home.

Dear Coleridge,—I do confess that I have not sent your books as I ought to have done; but you know how the human free will is tethered, and that we perform promises to ourselves no better than to our friends. A watch is come for you. Do you want it soon, or shall I wait till some one travels your way? You, like me, I suppose, reckon the lapse of time from the waste thereof, as boys let a cock run to waste; too idle to stop it, and rather amused with seeing it dribble. Your poems have begun printing; Longman sent to me to arrange them, the old and the new together. It seems you have left it to him; so I classed them, as nearly as I could, according to dates. First, after the Dedication, (which must march first,) and which I have transplanted from before the Preface, (which stood like a dead wall of prose between,) to be the first poem; then comes "The Pixies," and the things most juvenile; then on "To Chatterton," &c.,—on, lastly, to the "Ode on the Departing Year," and "Musings,"—which finish. Longman wanted the Ode first, but the

arrangement I have made is precisely that marked out in the Dedication, following the order of time. I told Longman I was sure that you would omit a good portion of the first edition. I instanced several sonnets, &c.; but that was not his plan, and, as you have done nothing in it, all I could do was to arrange 'em on the supposition that all were to be retained. A few I positively rejected; such as that of "The Thimble," and that of "Flicker and Flicker's wife," and that *not* in the manner of Spenser, which you yourself had stigmatised—and the "Man of Ross," —I doubt whether I should this last. It is not too late to save it. The first proof is only just come. I have been forced to call that Cupid's Elixir, "Kisses." It stands in your first volume, as an Effusion, so that, instead of prefixing The Kiss to that of "One Kiss, dear Maid," &c., I have ventured to entitle it "To Sara." I am aware of the nicety of changing even so mere a trifle as a title to so short a piece, and subverting old associations; but two called "Kisses" would have been absolutely ludicrous, and "Effusion" is no name, and these poems come close together. I promise you not to alter one word in any poem whatever, but to take your last text, where two are. Can you send any wishes about the book? Longman, I think, should have settled with you; but it seems you have left it to him. Write as soon as you possibly can; for, without making myself responsible, I feel myself, in some sort, accessory to the selection, which I am to proof-correct; but I decidedly said to Briggs that I was sure you would omit more. Those I have positively rubbed off, I can swear to *individually*, (except the "Man of Ross," which is too familiar in Pope,) but no others—you have your cue. For my part, I would rather all the *Juvenilia* were kept—*memoriæ causâ*.

Robert Lloyd has written me a masterly letter, containing a character of his father. See how different

from Charles he views the old man! (*Literatim*): "My father smokes, repeats Homer in Greek, and Virgil, and is learning, when from business, with all the vigour of a young man, Italian. He is, really, a wonderful man. He mixes public and private business, the intricacies of disordering life with his religion and devotion. No one more rationally enjoys the romantic scenes of Nature, and the chit-chat and little vagaries of his children; and, though surrounded with an ocean of affairs, the very neatness of his most obscure cupboard in the house passes not unnoticed. I never knew any one view with such clearness, nor so well satisfied with things as they are, and make such allowance for things which must appear perfect Syriac to him." By the last he means the Lloydisms of the younger branches. His portrait of Charles (exact as far as he has had opportunities of noting him) is most exquisite:—"Charles is become steady as a church, and as straightforward as a Roman road. It would distract him to mention any thing that was not as plain as sense; he seems to have run the whole scenery of life, and now rests as the formal precision of non-existence." Here is genius I think, and 'tis seldom a young man, a Lloyd, looks at a father (so differing) with such good nature while he is alive. Write—

I am in post-haste, C. LAMB.
Love, &c., to Sara, P., and H.

CXIII. TO THE SAME

April 13th, 1803.

My dear Coleridge,—Things have gone on better with me since you left me. I expect to have my old housekeeper home again in a week or two. She has mended most rapidly. My health too has been better since you took away that Montero cap. I have left off cayenned eggs and such bolsters to discomfort.

There was death in that cap. I mischievously wished that by some inauspicious jolt the whole contents might be shaken, and the coach set on fire; for you said they had that property. How the old gentleman, who joined you at Grantham, would have clapp'd his hands to his knees, and not knowing but it was an immediate visitation of God that burnt him, how pious it would have made him!—him, I mean, that brought the influenza with him, and only took places for one—an old sinner; he must have known what he had got with him! However, I wish the cap no harm for the sake of the *head it fits*, and could be content to see it disfigure my healthy sideboard again.

What do you think of smoking? I want your sober, *average*, *noon opinion* of it. I generally am eating my dinner about the time I should determine it.

Morning is a girl, and can't smoke — she's no evidence one way or the other; and Night is so evidently *bought over*, that he can't be a very upright judge. May be the truth is, that *one* pipe is wholesome; *two* pipes toothsome; *three* pipes noisome; *four* pipes fulsome; *five* pipes quarrelsome, and that's the *sum* on't. But that is deciding rather upon rhyme than reason. . . . After all, our instincts *may* be best. Wine, I am sure, good mellow, generous Port, can hurt nobody, unless those who take it to excess, which they may easily avoid if they observe the rules of temperance.

Bless you, old sophist, who next to human nature taught me all the corruption I was capable of knowing! And bless your Montero cap, and your trail, (which shall come after you whenever you appoint,) and your wife and children—Pipos especially.

When shall we two smoke again? Last night I had been in a sad quandary of spirits, in what they call the evening; but a pipe, and some generous Port,

and *King Lear*, (being alone,) had their effects as solacers. I went to bed pot-valiant. By the way, may not the Ogles of Somersetshire be remotely descended from King Lear? C. L.

CXIV. TO THOMAS MANNING

[1803.]

My dear Manning,—Although something of the latest, and after two months' waiting, your letter was highly gratifying. Some parts want a little explication; for example, "the god-like face of the first consul." *What god* does he most resemble, Mars, Bacchus, or Apollo? or the god Serapis, who, flying (as Egyptian chronicles deliver) from the fury of the dog Anubis (the hieroglyph of an English mastiff), lighted upon Monomotapa (or the land of apes), by some thought to be Old France, and there set up a tyranny, &c. Our London prints of him represent him gloomy and sulky, like an angry Jupiter. I hear that he is very small, even less than I. I envy you your access to this great man, much more than your séances and conversaziones, which I have a shrewd suspicion must be something dull. What you assert concerning the actors of Paris, that they exceed our comedians, bad as ours are, is *impossible*. In one sense it may be true, that their fine gentlemen, in what is called genteel comedy, may possibly be more brisk and *dégagé* than Mr Caulfield, or Mr Whitfield; but have any of them the power to move *laughter in excess*? or can a Frenchman *laugh*? Can they batter at your judicious ribs till they *shake*, nothing loth to be so shaken? This is John Bull's criterion, and it shall be mine. You are Frenchified. Both your taste and morals are corrupt and perverted. By and by you will come to assert that Buonaparte is as great a general as the old Duke of Cumberland, and deny

that one Englishman can beat three Frenchmen. Read *Henry the Fifth* to restore your orthodoxy.

All things continue at a stay-still in London. I cannot repay your new novelties with my stale reminiscences. Like the prodigal, I have spent my patrimony, and feed upon the superannuated chaff and dry husks of repentance; yet sometimes I remember with pleasure the hounds and horses, which I kept in the days of my prodigality. I find nothing new, nor any thing that has so much of the gloss and dazzle of novelty as may rebound in narrative, and cast a reflective glimmer across the channel. Something I will say about people that you and I know. Fenwick is still in debt, and the Professor has not done making love to his new spouse. I think he never looks into an almanack, or he would have found by the calendar that the honeymoon was extinct a moon ago. Southey is Secretary to the Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer; £400 a year. Stoddart is turned Doctor of Civil Law, and dwells in Doctors' Commons. I fear *his* commons are short, as they say. Did I send you an epitaph I scribbled upon a poor girl who died at nineteen?—a good girl, and a pretty girl, and a clever girl, but strangely neglected by all her friends and kin.

> "Under this cold marble stone
> Sleep the sad remains of one
> Who, when alive, by few or none
> Was loved, as loved she might have been,
> If she prosperous days had seen,
> Or had thriving been, I ween.
> Only this cold funeral stone
> Tells she was beloved by one,
> Who on the marble graves his moan."

Brief, and pretty, and tender, is it not? I send you this, being the only piece of poetry I have *done* since the Muses all went with T. M. to Paris. I have neither stuff in my brain, nor paper in my drawer, to write you a longer letter. Liquor and

company and wicked tobacco, a'nights, have quite dispericraniated me, as one may say; but you, who spiritualise upon Champagne, may continue to write long letters, and stuff 'em with amusement to the end. Too long they cannot be, any more than a codicil to a will, which leaves me sundry parks and manors not specified in the deed. But don't be *two months* before you write again. These from merry old England, on the day of her valiant patron St George. C. LAMB.

CXV. TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

May 27th, 1803.

My dear Coleridge,—The date of my last was one day prior to the receipt of your letter, full of foul omens. I explain this lest you should have thought mine too light a reply to such a sad matter. I seriously hope by this time you have given up all thoughts of journeying to the green islands of the Bless'd,—(voyages in time of war are very precarious)—or at least, that you will take them in your way to the Azores. Pray be careful of this letter till it has done its duty, for it is to inform you that I have booked off your watch, (laid in cotton like an untimely fruit,) and with it Condillac, and all other books of yours which were left here. These will set out on Monday next, the 29th May, by Kendal waggon, from White Horse, Cripplegate. You will make seasonable inquiries, for a watch mayn't come your way again in a hurry. I have been repeatedly after Tobin, and now hear that he is in the country, not to return till the middle of June. I will take care and see him with the earliest. But cannot you write pathetically to him, enforcing a speeding mission of your books for literary purposes? He is too good a retainer to Literature to let her interests suffer through his default.

And why, in the name of Beelzebub, are your books to travel from Barnard's Inn to the Temple, and thence circuitously to Cripplegate, when their business is to take a short cut down Holborn Hill, up Snow ditto, on to Wood Street, &c.? The former mode seems a sad superstitious subdivision of labour. Well! the "Man of Ross" is to stand; Longman begs for it; the printer stands with a wet sheet in one hand, and a useless Pica in the other, in tears, pleading for it; I relent. Besides, it was a *Salutation* poem, and has the mark of the beast "Tobacco" upon it. Thus much I have done; I have swept off the lines about *widows* and *orphans* in the second edition, which (if you remember) you most awkwardly and illogically caused to be inserted between two *Ifs*, to the great breach and disunion of said *Ifs*, which now meet again, (as in the first edition,) like two clever lawyers arguing a case. Another reason for subtracting the pathos was, that the "Man of Ross" is too familiar to need telling what he did, especially in worse lines than Pope told it, and it now stands simply as "Reflections at an Inn about a known Character," and sucking an old story into an accommodation with present feelings. Here is no breaking spears with Pope, but a new, independent, and really a very pretty poem. In fact 'tis as I used to admire it in the first volume and I have even dared to restore

"If neath this roof thy *wine-cheer'd* moments pass,"

for

"Beneath this roof if thy cheer'd moments pass."

"Cheer'd" is a sad general word, "*wine-cheer'd*" I'm sure you'd give me, if I had a speaking trumpet to sound to you 300 miles. But I am your *factotum*: and that, (save in this instance, which is a single case, and I can't get at you,) shall be next to a *fac-*

nihil—at most a *fac-simile*. I have ordered "Imitation of Spenser" to be restored on Wordsworth's authority; and now, all that you will miss will be "Flicker and Flicker's Wife," "The Thimble," "Breathe *dear harmonist*," and *I believe*, "The Child that was fed with Manna." Another volume will clear off all your Anthologic Morning-Postian Epistolary Miscellanies: but pray don't put "Christabel" therein; don't let that sweet maid come forth attended with Lady Holland's mob at her heels. Let there be a separate volume of Tales, Choice Tales, "Ancient Mariners," &c. A word of your health will be richly acceptable. C. LAMB.

CXVI. TO JOHN RICKMAN

Saturday Morning.
July 16, 1803.

Dear Rickman,—I enclose you a wonder, a letter from the shades. A dead body wants to return, and be inrolled *inter vivos*. 'Tis a gentle ghost, and in this Galvanic age it may have a chance.

Mary and I are setting out for the Isle of Wight. We make but a short stay, and shall pass the time betwixt that place and Portsmouth, where Fenwick is. I sadly wanted to explore the Peak this Summer; but Mary is against steering without card or compass, and we should be at large in Darbyshire.

We shall be at home this night and to-morrow, if you can come and take a farewell pipe.

I regularly transmitted your Notices to the *Morning Post*, but they have not been duly honoured. The fault lay not in me.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

CXVII. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

Nov. 8, 1803.

My dear Sir,—I have been sitting down for three or four days successively to the review, which I so much wished to do well, and to your satisfaction. But I can produce nothing but absolute flatness and nonsense. My health and spirits are so bad, and my nerves so irritable, that I am sure, if I persist, I shall teaze myself into a fever. You do not know how sore and weak a brain I have, or you would allow for many things in me which you set down for whims. I solemnly assure you that I never more wished to prove to you the value which I have for you than at this moment; but although in so seemingly trifling a service I cannot get through with it, I pray you to impute it to this one sole cause, ill health. I hope I am above subterfuge, and that you will do me this justice to think so.

You will give me great satisfaction by sealing my pardon and oblivion in a line or two, before I come to see you, or I shall be ashamed to come.

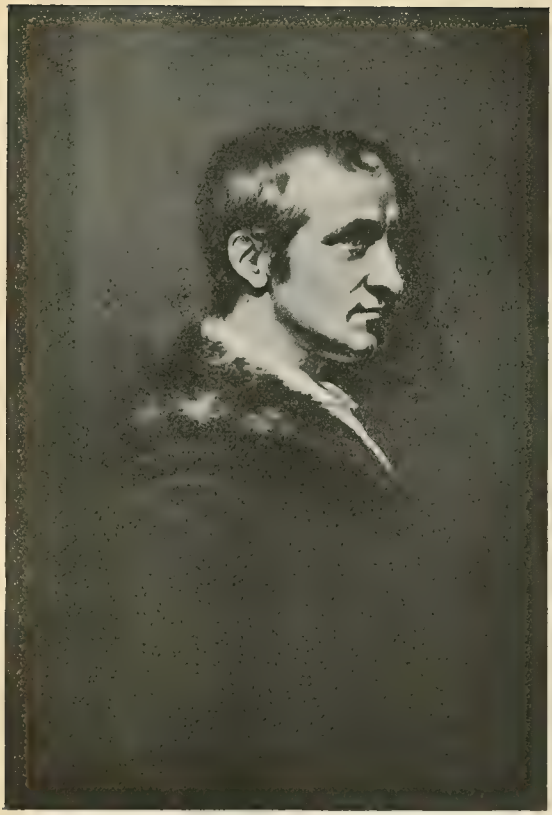
Yours, with great truth,

C. Lamb.

CXVIII. TO THE SAME

Nov. 10, 1803.

Dear Godwin,—You never made a more unlucky and perverse mistake than to suppose that the reason of my not writing that cursed thing was to be found in your book. I assure you most sincerely that I have been greatly delighted with Chaucer. I may be wrong, but I think there is one considerable error runs through it, which is a conjecturing spirit, a fondness for filling out the picture by supposing what Chaucer did and how he felt, where the materials are scanty. So far from meaning to withhold from you



William Godwin, from an engraving by G. Dawe, after the painting by J. Northcote, R.A.

(out of mistaken tenderness) this opinion of mine, I plainly told Mrs Godwin that I did find *a fault*, which I should reserve naming until I should see you and talk it over. This she may very well remember, and also that I declined naming this fault until she drew it from me by asking me if there was not too much fancy in the work. I then confessed generally what I felt, but refused to go into particulars until I had seen you. I am never very fond of saying things before third persons, because in the relation (such is human nature) something is sure to be dropped. If Mrs Godwin has been the cause of your misconstruction, I am very angry, tell her; yet it is not an anger unto death. I remember also telling Mrs G. (which she may have *dropt*) that I was by turns considerably more delighted than I expected. But I wished to reserve all this until I saw you. I even had conceived an expression to meet you with, which was thanking you for some of the most exquisite pieces of criticism I had ever read in my life. In particular, I should have brought forward that on "Troilus and Cressida" and Shakespear, which, it is little to say, delighted me, and instructed me (if not absolutely *instructed* me, yet put into *full-grown sense* many conceptions which had arisen in me before in my most discriminating moods). All these things I was preparing to say, and bottling them up till I came, thinking to please my friend and host, the author! when lo! this deadly blight intervened.

I certainly ought to make great allowances for your misunderstanding me. You, by long habits of composition and a greater command gained over your own powers, cannot conceive of the desultory and uncertain way in which I (an author by fits) sometimes cannot put the thoughts of a common letter into sane prose. Any work which I take upon myself as an engagement will act upon me to torment, *e.g.*, when I have undertaken, as three or four times I have, a school-boy

copy of verses for Merchant Taylor's boys, at a guinea a copy, I have fretted over them, in perfect inability to do them, and have made my sister wretched with my wretchedness for a week together. The same, till by habit I have acquired a mechanical command, I have felt in making paragraphs. As to reviewing, in particular, my head is so whimsical a head, that I cannot, after reading another man's book, let it have never been so pleasing, give any account of it in any methodical way. I cannot follow his train. Something like this you must have perceived of me in conversation. Ten thousand times I have confessed to you, talking of my talents, my utter inability to remember in any comprehensive way what I read. I can vehemently applaud, or perversely stickle, at *parts*; but I cannot grasp at a whole. This infirmity (which is nothing to brag of) may be seen in my two little compositions, the tale and my play, in both which no reader, however partial, can find any story. I wrote such stuff about Chaucer, and got into such digressions, quite irreducible into $1\frac{1}{5}$ column of a paper, that I was perfectly ashamed to shew it you. However, it is become a serious matter that I should convince you I neither slunk from the task through a wilful deserting neglect, or through any (most imaginary on your part) distaste of Chaucer; and I will try my hand again, I hope with better luck. My health is bad and my time taken up, but all I can spare between this and Sunday shall be employed for you, since you desire it: and if I bring you a crude, wretched paper on Sunday, you must burn it, and forgive me; if it proves anything better than I predict, may it be a peace-offering of sweet incense between us. C. Lamb.

CHAPTER III

A FRESH START: "MR H." AND CHILDREN'S BOOKS JANUARY 1804—DECEMBER 1809

CXIX. TO ROBERT LLOYD

Tuesday March 13, 1804.

Dear Robert,—I received your notes safe, and thank you for them. It seems you are about to be married. Joy to you and uninterrupted satisfaction in that state. But who is the Lady? it is the character of your letters, that you omit facts, dates, names and matter, and describe nothing but feelings; in which as I cannot always partake, as being more intense in degree or different in kind from my own tranquil ones, I cannot always well tell how to reply. Your dishes are too much sauced, and spiced, and flavored, for me to suppose that you can relish my plain meats and vulgar aliment. Still, Robert, if I cannot always send you of the same, they have a smack and a novelty, a Robert-ism about them, that makes them a dainty stimulus to my palate at times.

I have little to tell you of. You are mistaken; I am disengaged from all newspaper connexions, and breathe a freer air in consequence. I was bound like Gulliver in a multitude of little chains; which, by quotidian teazing, swelled to a rack and a gibbet in the year's account. I am poorer but happier. Your three pounds came seasonably, but I doubt whether I am fairly entitled to them as a debt.

I am obliged to break off here, and would not send this unfinished, but that you might otherwise be uneasy about the monies.

Am I ever to see you? For it is like letters to the dead, or for a friend to write to his friend in the Fortunate Isles, or the moon, or at the Antipodes, to

address a line to one in Warwickshire that I am never to see in London. I shall lose the very face of Robert by disuse, and I question, if I were a painter, if I could now paint it from memory.

I could tell you many things; but you are so spiritual and abstracted, that I fear to insult you with tidings of this world. But may your approaching husband-hood humanize you. I think I see a dawn. I am sure joy is rising upon you, and I stand a tiptoe to see the sun ascending, till it gets up and up, and, "while a man tells the story," shews at last a fair face and a full light.—

God bless you Robert.

C. L.

CXX. TO SARAH STODDART

May, 1804.

My dear Miss Stoddart,—Mary has written so fully to you that I have nothing to add but that in all the kindness she has exprest, and loving desire to see you again, I bear my full part. You will perhaps like to tear this half from the sheet, and give your brother only his strict due, the remainder. So I will just repay your late kind letter with this short post-script to hers. Come over here, and let us all be merry again.

C. Lamb.

CXXI. TO ROBERT LLOYD

[September 13, 1804.]

Dear Robert,—I was startled in a very pleasant manner by the contents of your letter. It was like your good self, to take so handsome an opportunity of renewing an old friendship. I thank you kindly for your offers to bring me acquainted with Mrs Ll. I cannot come now, but assuredly I will some time or other, to see how this new relation sits upon you. I am naturally shy of new faces; but the Lady who has chosen my old friend Robert, cannot have a

repelling one. Assure her of my sincere congratulations and friendly feelings. Mary joins in both with me, and considers herself as only left out of your kind invitation by some lapus styli.

We have already had all the holydays we can have this year. We have been spending our usual summer month at Richmond, from which place we traced the banks of the old Thames for ten and twenty miles, in daily walks or rides, and found beauties which may compare with Ulswater and Windermere. We visited Windsor, Hampton, &c. &c. But this is a deviation from the subject with which I began my letter.

Some day I certainly shall come and see you, in your new light; no longer the restless (but good) Robert; but now the staid, sober (and not less good) married Robert. And how does Plumstead the impetuous take your getting the start of him? When will he subside into matrimony? Priscilla has taken a long time indeed to think about it. I will suppose that her first choice is now her final; though you do not expressly say that she is to be a Wordsworth. I wish her, and dare promise her, all happiness.

All these new nuptials do not make me unquiet in the perpetual prospect of celibacy. There is a quiet dignity in old bachelorhood; a leisure from cares, noise &c.; an enthronization upon the armed-chair of a man's feeling that he may sit, walk, read, unmolested; to none accountable—but hush! or I shall be torn in pieces, like a churlish Orpheus, by young married women and bride-maids of Birmingham.—The close is this, to every man that way of life, which is his election, is best. Be as happy in yours, as I am determined to be in mine, and we shall strive lovingly who shall sing best the praises of matrimony, and the praises of singleness. Adieu, my old friend in a new character, and believe me that no "wounds" have pierced our friendship: only a long want of seeing

each other has disfurnished us of topics on which to talk. Is not your new fortunes a topic, which may hold us for some months, the honey months at least?

CXXII. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Nov. 7, 1804.

Dear Southey,—You were the last person from whom we heard of Dyer, and if you know where to forward to him the news I now send I shall be obliged to you to lose no time. Dyer's sister-in-law, who lives in St Dunstan's Court, wrote to him about three weeks ago to the Hope Inn, Cambridge, to inform him that Squire Houlbert, or some such name, of Denmark Hill, has died, and left her husband a thousand pounds, and two or three hundred to Dyer. Her letter got no answer, and she does not know where to direct to him; so she came to me, who am equally in the dark. Her story is, that Dyer's immediately coming to town now, and signing some papers, will save him a considerable sum of money; how, I don't understand; but it is very right he should hear of this. She has left me barely time for the post; so I conclude with love to all at Keswick.

Dyer's brother, who by his wife's account has got £1000 left him, is father of the little dirty girl, Dyer's niece and factotum.—In haste,

Yours truly, C. Lamb.

If you send George this, cut off the last paragraph.

D.'s laundress had a letter a few days since; but George never dates.

CXXIII. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

[Undated.]

Dear Godwin,—I have found it for several reasons indispensable to my comfort, and to my sister's, to

have no visitors in the forenoon. If I cannot accomplish this I am determined to leave town.

I am extremely sorry to do anything in the slightest degree that may seem offensive to you or to Mrs Godwin, but when a general rule is fixed on, you know how odious in a case of this sort it is to make exceptions; I assure you I have given up more than one friendship in stickling for this point. It would be unfair to those from whom I have parted with regret to make exceptions, which I would not do for them. Let me request you not to be offended, and to request Mrs G. not to be offended, if I beg both your compliances with this wish. Your friendship is as dear to me as that of any person on earth, and if it were not for the necessity of keeping tranquillity at home, I would not seem so unreasonable.

If you were to see the agitation that my sister is in, between the fear of offending you and Mrs G. and the difficulty of maintaining a system which she feels we must do to live without wretchedness, you would excuse this seeming strange request, which I send with a trembling anxiety as to its reception with you, whom I would never offend. I rely on your goodness.

C. Lamb.

CXXIV. TO THE SAME

I repent. Can that God whom thy votaries say that thou hast demolished expect more? I did indite a splenetic letter, but did the black Hypocondria never gripe *thy* heart, till thou hast taken a friend for an enemy? The foul fiend Flibbertigibbet leads me over four inched bridges, to course my own shadow for a traitor. There are certain positions of the moon, under which I counsel thee not to take anything written from this domicile as serious.

I rank thee with Alves, Latinè, Helvetius, or any of his cursed crew? Thou art my friend, and hence-

forth my philosopher—thou shalt teach Distinction to the junior branches of my household, and Deception to the greyhaired Janitress at my door.

What! Are these atonements? Can Arcadias be brought upon knees, creeping and crouching?

Come, as Macbeth's drunken porter says, knock, knock, knock, knock, knock, knock, knock—seven times in a day shalt thou batter at my peace, and if I shut aught against thee, save the Temple of Janus, may Briareus, with his hundred hands, in each a brass knocker, lead me such a life. C. LAMB.

CXXV. TO THOMAS MANNING

16, Mitre Court Buildings,
Saturday, 24th Feb. 1805.

Dear Manning,—I have been very unwell since I saw you: a sad depression of spirits, a most unaccountable nervousness; from which I have been partially relieved by an odd accident. You knew Dick Hopkins, the swearing scullion of Caius? This fellow, by industry and agility, has thrust himself into the important situations (no sinecures, believe me) of cook to Trinity Hall and Caius College: and the generous creature has contrived, with the greatest delicacy imaginable, to send me a present of Cambridge brawn. What makes it the more extraordinary is, that the man never saw me in his life that I know of. I suppose he has *heard* of me. I did not immediately recognise the donor; but one of Richard's cards, which had accidently fallen into the straw, detected him in a moment. Dick, you know, was always remarkable for flourishing. His card imports, that "orders (to wit, for brawn) from any part of England, Scotland, or Ireland, will be duly executed," &c. At first, I thought of declining the present; but Richard knew my blind side when he pitched upon brawn. 'Tis of all my hobbies the supreme in the eating way. He might have sent sops

from the pan, skimmings, crumpets, chips, hog's lard, the tender brown judiciously scalped from a fillet of veal (dexterously replaced by a salamander), the tops of asparagus, fugitive livers, runnaway gizzards of fowls, the eyes of martyred pigs, tender effusions of laxative woodcocks, the red spawn of lobsters, leverets' ears, and such pretty filchings common to cooks; but these had been ordinary presents, the every-day courtesies of dish-washers to their sweethearts. Brawn was a noble thought. It is not every common gullet-fancier that can properly esteem it. It is like a picture of one of the choice old Italian masters. Its gusto is of that hidden sort. As Wordsworth sings of a modest poet,—"you must love him, ere to you he will seem worthy of your love"; so brawn, you must taste it ere to you it will seem to have any taste at all. But 'tis nuts to the adept: those that will send out their tongue and feelers to find it out. It will be wooed, and not unsought be won. Now, ham-essence, lobsters, turtle, such popular minions, absolutely *court you*, lay themselves out to strike you at first smack, like one of David's pictures (they call him *Darveed*) compared with the plain russet-coated wealth of a Titian or a Correggio, as I illustrated above. Such are the obvious glaring heathen virtues of a corporation dinner, compared with the reserved collegiate worth of brawn. Do me the favour to leave off the business which you may be at present upon, and go immediately to the kitchens of Trinity and Caius, and make my most respectful compliments to Mr Richard Hopkins, and assure him that his brawn is most excellent; and that I am moreover obliged to him for his innuendo about salt water and bran, which I shall not fail to improve. I leave it to you whether you shall choose to pay him the civility of asking him to dinner while you stay in Cambridge, or in whatever other way you may best like to show your gratitude to *my friend*. Richard

Hopkins, considered in many points of view, is a very extraordinary character. Adieu. I hope to see you to supper in London soon, where we will taste Richard's brawn, and drink his health in a cheerful but moderate cup. We have not many such men in any rank of life as Mr R. Hopkins. Crisp, the barber, of St Mary's, was just such another. I wonder *he* never sent me any little token, some chestnuts, or a puff, or two pound of hair: just to remember him by. Gifts are like nails. *Præsens ut absens*; that is, your *present* makes amends for your absence.

Yours, C. Lamb.

CXXVI. TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

14th June, 1805.

My dear Miss Wordsworth,—Your long kind letter has not been thrown away (for it has given me great pleasure to find you are all resuming your old occupations, and are better); but poor Mary, to whom it is addressed, cannot yet relish it. She has been attacked by one of her severe illnesses, and is at present *from home*. Last Monday week was the day she left me, and I hope I may calculate upon having her again in a month or little more. I am rather afraid late hours have in this case contributed to her indisposition. But when she discovers symptoms of approaching illness, it is not easy to say what is best to do. Being by ourselves is bad, and going out is bad. I get so irritable and wretched with fear, that I constantly hasten on the disorder. You cannot conceive the misery of such a foresight. I am sure that, for the week before she left me, I was little better than light-headed. I now am calm, but sadly taken down and flat. I have every reason to suppose that this illness, like all her former ones, will be but temporary; but I cannot always feel so. Meantime she is dead to me,

and I miss a prop. All my strength is gone, and I am like a fool, bereft of her co-operation. I dare not think, lest I should think wrong; so used am I to look up to her in the least and the biggest perplexity. To say all that I know of her would be more than I think any body could believe, or even understand; and when I hope to have her well again with me, it would be sinning against her feelings to go about to praise her; for I can conceal nothing that I do from her. She is older and wiser and better than I, and all my wretched imperfections I cover to myself by resolutely thinking on her goodness. She would share life and death, heaven and hell, with me. She lives but for me; and I know I have been wasting and teasing her life for five years past incessantly with my cursed drinking and ways of going on. But even in this upbraiding of myself, I am offending against her, for I know that she has cleaved to me for better, for worse; and if the balance has been against her hitherto, it was a noble trade. I am stupid, and lose myself in what I write. I write rather what answers to my feelings (which are sometimes sharp enough) than express my present ones, for I am only flat and stupid. I am sure you will excuse my writing any more, I am so very poorly.

I cannot resist transcribing three or four lines which poor Mary made upon a picture (a Holy Family) which we saw at an auction only one week before she left home. She was then beginning to show signs of ill boding. They are sweet lines and upon a sweet picture; but I send them only as the last memorial of her.

"VIRGIN AND CHILD, L. DA VINCI

"Maternal Lady, with thy virgin grace,
Heaven-born, thy Jesus seemeth sure,
And thou a virgin pure.
Lady most perfect, when thy angel face
Men look upon, they wish to be
A Catholic, Madonna fair, to worship thee."

You had her lines about the "Lady Blanch." You have not had some which she wrote upon a copy of a girl from Titian, which I had hung up where that print of Blanch and the Abbess (as she beautifully interpreted two female figures from L. da Vinci) had hung in our room. 'Tis light and pretty:—

"Who art thou, fair one, who usurp'st the place
Of Blanch, the lady of the matchless grace?
Come, fair and pretty, tell to me
Who in thy lifetime thou mightst be?
Thou pretty art and fair,
But with the Lady Blanch thou never must compare.
No need for Blanch her history to tell,
Whoever saw her face, they there did read it well;
But when I look on thee, I only know
There lived a pretty maid some hundred years ago."

This is a little unfair, to tell so much about ourselves, and to advert so little to your letter, so full of comfortable tidings of you all. But my own cares press pretty close upon me, and you can make allowance. That you may go on gathering strength and peace is my next wish to Mary's recovery.

I had almost forgot your repeated invitation. Supposing that Mary will be well and able, there is another *ability* which you may guess at, which I cannot promise myself. In prudence we ought not to come. This illness will make it still more prudential to wait. It is not a balance of this way of spending our money against another way, but an absolute question of whether we shall stop now, or go on wasting away the little we have got beforehand, which my wise conduct has already encroached upon one half. My best love, however, to you all; and to that most friendly creature, Mrs Clarkson, and better health to her, when you see or write to her.

CHARLES LAMB.

CXXVII. TO THOMAS MANNING

[July 27, 1805.]

Dear Archimedes,—Things have gone on badly with thy ungeometrical friend; but they are on the turn. My old housekeeper has shown signs of convalescence, and will shortly resume the power of the keys, so I sha'n't be cheated of my tea and liquors. Wind in the West, which promotes tranquillity. Have leisure now to anticipate seeing thee again. Have been taking leave of tobacco in a rhyming address. Had thought *that vein* had long since closed up. Find I can rhyme and reason too. Think of studying mathematics, to restrain the fire of my genius, which G. D. recommends. Have frequent bleedings at the nose, which shows plethoric. Maybe shall try the sea myself, that great scene of wonders. Got incredibly sober and regular; shave oftener, and hum a tune, to signify cheerfulness and gallantry.

Suddenly disposed to sleep, having taken a quart of pease with bacon and stout. Will not refuse Nature, who has done such things for me!

Nurse! don't call me unless Mr Manning comes. —What! the gentleman in spectacles?—Yes.

Dormit. C. L.

Saturday,
Hot Noon.

CXXVIII. TO WILLIAM AND DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

Sept. 28th, 1805.

My dear Wordsworth, (or Dorothy rather, for to you appertains the biggest part of this answer by right,) I will not again deserve reproach by so long a silence. I have kept deluding myself with the idea that Mary would write to you, but she is so lazy, (or, which I believe is the true state of the case, so diffident,) that it must revert to me as usual. Though she writes a pretty good style, and has some notion of the force of words, she is not always so certain of the true ortho-

graphy of them: and that, and a poor handwriting (in this age of female calligraphy), often deters her, where no other reason does.

We have neither of us been very well for some weeks past. I am very nervous, and she most so at those times when I am; so that a merry friend, adverting to the noble consolation we were able to afford each other, denominated us, not unaptly, Gum-Boil and Tooth-Ache, for they used to say that a gum-boil is a great relief to a tooth-ache.

We have been two tiny excursions this Summer, for three or four days each, to a place near Harrow, and to Egham, where Cooper's Hill is: and that is the total history of our rustications this year. Alas! how poor a round to Skiddaw and Helvellyn, and Borrowdale, and the magnificent sesquipedalia of the year 1802! Poor old Molly! to have lost her pride, that "last infirmity of noble minds," and her cow. Fate need not have set her wits to such an old Molly. I am heartily sorry for her. Remember us lovingly to her; and in particular remember us to Mrs Clarkson in the most kind manner.

I hope, by "southwards," you mean that she will be at or near London, for she is a great favourite of both of us, and we feel for her health as much as possible for any one to do. She is one of the friendliest, comfortablest women we know, and made our little stay at your cottage one of the pleasantest times we ever past. We were quite strangers to her. Mr. C. is with you too; our kindest separate remembrances to him. As to our special affairs, I am looking about me. I have done nothing since the beginning of last year, when I lost my newspaper job; and having had a long idleness, I must do something, or we shall get very poor. Sometimes I think of a farce, but hitherto all schemes have gone off; an idle brag or two of an evening, vapouring out of a pipe, and going off in the morning; but now I have

bid farewell to my "sweet enemy," Tobacco, I shall perhaps set nobly to work. Hang work!

I wish that all the year were holiday; I am sure that indolence—indefeasible indolence—is the true state of man, and business the invention of the old Teazer, whose interference doomed Adam to an apron and set him a hoeing. Pen and ink, and clerks and desks, were the refinements of this old torturer some thousand years after, under pretence of "Commerce allying distant shores, promoting and diffusing knowledge, good," &c. &c.

I wish you may think this a handsome farewell to my "Friendly Traitress." Tobacco has been my evening comfort and my morning curse for these five years; and you know how difficult it is from refraining to pick one's lips even, when it has become a habit. This poem is the only one which I have finished since so long as when I wrote "Hester Savory." I have had it in my head to do it these two years, but tobacco stood in its own light when it gave me headaches that prevented my singing its praises. Now you have got it, you have got all my store, for I have absolutely not another line. No more has Mary. We have nobody about us that cares for poetry; and who will rear grapes when he shall be the sole eater? Perhaps if you encourage us to show you what we may write, we may do something now and then before we absolutely forget the quantity of an English line for want of practice. The "Tobacco," being a little in the way of Withers (whom Southey so much likes), perhaps you will somehow convey it to him with my kind remembrances. Then, every body will have seen it that I wish to see it, I having sent it to Malta.

I remain, dear W. and D., yours truly,

C. Lamb.

CXXIX. TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

[Nov. 10, 1805.]

Dear Hazlitt,—I was very glad to hear from you, and that your journey was so *picturesque*. We miss you, as we foretold we should. One or two things have happened, which are beneath the dignity of epistolary communication, but which, seated about our fireside at night, (the winter hands of pork have begun,) gesture and emphasis might have talked into some importance. Something about Rickman's wife; for instance, how tall she is, and that she visits pranked up like a Queen of the May, with green streamers: a good-natured woman though, which is as much as you can expect from a friend's wife, whom you got acquainted with a bachelor. Some things too about Monkey, which can't so well be written: how it set up for a fine lady, and thought it had got lovers, and was obliged to be convinced of its age from the parish register, where it was proved to be only twelve; and an edict issued, that it should not give itself airs yet these four years; and how it got leave to be called Miss, by grace: these, and such like hows, were in my head to tell you; but who can write? Also how Manning is come to town in spectacles, and studies physic; is melancholy, and seems to have something in his head, which he don't impart. Then, how I am going to leave off smoking. O la! your Leonardos of Oxford made my mouth water. I was hurried through the gallery, and they escaped me. What do I say? I was a Goth then, and should not have noticed them. I had not settled my notions of beauty: I have now for ever!—the small head, the long eye,—that sort of peering curve, —the wicked Italian mischief; the stick-at-nothing, Herodias's daughter kind of grace. You understand me? But you disappoint me in passing over in absolute silence the Blenheim Leonardo. Didn't you

see it? Excuse a lover's curiosity. I have seen no pictures of note since, except Mr Dawe's gallery. It is curious to see how differently two great men treat the same subject, yet both excellent in their way. For instance, Milton and Mr Dawe. Mr D. has chosen to illustrate the story of Samson exactly in the point of view in which Milton has been most happy: the interview between the Jewish hero, blind and captive, and Dalilah. Milton has imagined his locks grown again, strong as horse-hair, or porcupine's bristles; doubtless shaggy and black, as being hairs "which, of a nation armed, contained the strength." I don't remember he *says* black; but could Milton imagine them to be yellow? Do you? Mr Dawe, with striking originality of conception, has crowned him with a thin yellow wig, in colour precisely like Dyson's; in curl and quantity, resembling Mrs Professor's; his limbs rather stout,—about such a man as my brother or Rickman,—but no Atlas nor Hercules, nor yet so long as Dubois, the clown of Sadler's Wells. This was judicious, taking the spirit of the story rather than the fact; for doubtless God could communicate national salvation to the trust of flax and tow as well as hemp and cordage, and could draw down a temple with a golden tress as soon as with all the cables of the British navy.

Wasn't you sorry for Lord Nelson? I have followed him in fancy ever since I saw him walking in Pall Mall, (I was prejudiced against him before,) looking just as a hero should look; and I have been very much cut about it indeed. He was the only pretence of a great man we had. Nobody is left of any name at all. His secretary died by his side. I imagined him a Mr Scott, to be the man you met at Hume's; but I learnt from Mrs Hume that it is not the same. I met Mrs H. one day, and agreed to go on the Sunday to tea, but the rain prevented us, and the distance. I have been to apologize, and we

are to dine there the first fine Sunday. Strange perverseness! I never went while you stayed here; and now I *go to find you*! What other news is there, Mary? What puns have I made in the last fortnight? You never remember them. You have no relish for the comic. "Oh! tell Hazlitt not to forget to send the *American Farmer*. I daresay it is not so good as he fancies; but a book's a book." I have not heard from Wordsworth or from Malta since. Charles Kemble, it seems, enters into possession to-morrow. We sup at 109, Russell Street, this evening. I wish your brother would not drink. 'Tis a blemish in the greatest characters. You send me a modern quotation poetical. How do you like this in an old play? Vittoria Corombona, a spunky Italian lady, a Leonardo one, nick-named the White Devil, being on her trial for murder, &c.—and questioned about seducing a duke from his wife and the state, makes answer:—

> "Condemn you me for that the Duke did love me?
> So may you blame some fair and crystal river,
> For that some melancholic distracted man
> Hath drown'd himself in it."

N.B. I shall expect a line from you, if but a bare line, whenever you write to Russell Street, and a letter often when you do not. I pay no postage; but I will have consideration for you until Parliament time and franks. Luck to Ned Search, and the new art of colouring. Monkey sends her love; and Mary especially.

Yours truly,

C. Lamb.

CXXX. TO THOMAS MANNING

[Nov. 15, 1805.]

Dear Manning,—Certainly you could not have called at all hours from two till ten, for we have been only out of an evening Monday and Tuesday in this

week. But if you think you have, your thought shall go for the deed. We did pray for you on Wednesday night. Oysters unusually luscious; pearls of extraordinary magnitude found in them. I have made bracelets of them; given them in clusters to ladies. Last night we went out in despite, because you were not come at your hour.

This night we shall be at home; so shall we certainly, both, on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Take your choice, mind I don't say of one: but choose which evening you will not come, and come the other four. Doors open at five o'clock. Shells forced about nine. Every gentleman smokes or not as he pleases. C. L.

CXXXI. MISS LAMB TO MRS CLARKSON

Dec. 25, 1805.

My dear Mrs Clarkson,—I feel myself greatly obliged to you for your kind letter. The favorable account you give of your own health has afforded me the sincerest pleasure.

We wished ourselves with you at Grasmere. I rejoice to find both by yours, and Miss Wordsworth's last letter, that they have so wonderfully borne up under their sad affliction. We have heard no more of Coleridge. I will certainly write the instant I hear of him. I have not the most distant idea where it is probable he will land.

This is Christmas-day; it is a fine, cheerful morning, and I feel a kind of satisfaction that a sad, and dreary year, as this has been to me, and many of my best friends, is drawing to an end. In the usual compliments of this time of the year to you, and Mr Clarkson, I include a wish and hope, that we shall meet in the course of the ensuing year, with you, together with our kind Grasmere friends, and Cole-

ridge—How this happy meeting is to be brought about I know not; but I have a strong faith it will somehow happen.

My brother, who has been in an indifferent state of health lately, is tolerably well recovered and joins me in respects to Mr Clarkson and yourself not forgetting our fellow-traveller Miss Buck, and our old friend Tom, whom we do not like a bit the worse for being a little tall, a little awkward, and not over passionately addicted to literature.

Excuse this short return to your long, and interesting letter, but we have no common friends in town, to amuse you with particulars of in return. Whenever you shall feel yourself well enough to favor us with a line, we shall take it particularly kind.

Charles wants to hear about Mr Clarkson's quaker book, in what state of forwardness it is.

I remain, dear Mrs C.—

Your affectionate friend,

M. Lamb.

CXXXII. TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

Jan. 15th, 1806.

Dear Hazlitt,—Godwin went to Johnson's yesterday about your business. Johnson would not come down, or give any answer, but has promised to open the manuscript, and to give you an answer in one month. Godwin will punctually go again (Wednesday is Johnson's open day) yesterday four weeks next: *i.e.* in one lunar month from this time; till when, Johnson positively declines giving any answer I wish you joy on ending your Search. Mrs H. was naming something about a "Life of Fawcett," to be by you undertaken: the great Fawcett, as she explained to Manning, when he asked, "*What Fawcett?*" He innocently thought *Fawcett the Player*. But Fawcett the divine is known to many people, albeit un-

known to the Chinese inquirer. I should think, if you liked it, and Johnson declined it, that Phillips is the man. He is perpetually bringing out biographies, —Richardson, Wilks, Foot, Lee Lewis,—without number: little trim things in two easy volumes, price 12*s.* the two, made up of letters to and from, scraps, posthumous trifles, anecdotes, and about forty pages of hard biography. You might dish up a Fawcettiad in three months, and ask £60 or £80 for it. I should dare say that Phillips would catch at it. I wrote to you the other day in a great hurry. Did you get it? This is merely a letter of business at Godwin's request. Lord Nelson is quiet at last. His ghost only keeps a slight fluttering in odes and elegies in newspapers, and impromptus which could not be got ready before the funeral.

As for news, Fenwick is coming to town on Monday (if no kind angel intervene) to surrender himself to prison. He hopes to get the rules of the Fleet. On the same, or nearly the same day, Fell, my other quondam co-friend and drinker, will go to Newgate, and his wife and four children, I suppose, to the parish. Plenty of reflection and motives of gratitude to the wise Disposer of all things in *us*, whose prudent conduct has hitherto ensured us a warm fire and snug roof over our heads. *Nullum numen abest si sit Prudentia.* Alas! Prudentia is in the last quarter of her tutelary shining over me. A little time and I——; but maybe I may, at last, hit upon some mode of collecting some of the vast superfluities of this money-voiding town. Much is to be got, and I do not want much. All I ask is time and leisure; and I am cruelly off for them. When you have the inclination, I shall be very glad to have a letter from you. Your brother and Mrs H., I am afraid, think hardly of us for not coming oftener to see them; but we are distracted beyond what they can conceive with visitors and visitings. I never have an hour for my head to

work quietly its own workings; which you know is as necessary to the human system as sleep. Sleep, too, I can't get for these winds of a night: and without sleep and rest what should ensue? Lunacy. But I trust it won't.

Yours, dear H., C. Lamb.

CXXXIII. TO JOHN RICKMAN

Jan. 25, 1806.

Dear Rickman,—You do not happen to have any place at your disposal which would suit a decayed Literatus? I do not much expect that you have, or that you will go much out of the way to serve the object, when you hear it is Fell. But the case is, by a *mistaking* of his *turn*, as they call it, he is reduced, I am afraid, to extremities, and would be extremely glad of a place in an office. Now it does sometimes happen, that just as a man wants a place, a place wants him; and though this is a lottery to which none but G. Burnett would choose to trust his all, there is no harm just to call in at Despair's office for a friend, and see if *his* number is come up, (Burnett's further case I enclose by way of episode). Now, if you should happen, or any body you know, to want a *hand*, here is a young man of solid but not brilliant genius, who would turn his hand to the making out of dockets, penning a manifesto, or scoring a tally, not the worse (I hope) for knowing Latin and Greek, and having in youth conversed with the philosophers. But from these follies I believe he is thoroughly awakened, and would bind himself by a terrible oath never to imagine himself an extraordinary genius again.

Yours, &c., C. Lamb.

CXXXIV. TO WORDSWORTH

(A Fragment)

Feb. 1st, 1806.

A-propos of Spenser, (you will find him mentioned a page or two before, near enough for an *a-propos*,) I was discoursing on poetry (as one's apt to deceive one's self, and when a person is willing to *talk* of what one likes, to believe that he also likes the same, as lovers do) with a young gentleman of my office, who is deep read in Anacreon Moore, Lord Strangford, and the principal modern poets, and I happened to mention Epithalamiums, and that I could show him a very fine one of Spenser's. At the mention of this, my gentleman, who is a very fine gentleman, and is brother to the Miss Evans whom Coleridge so narrowly escaped marrying, pricked up his ears and expressed great pleasure, and begged that I would give him leave to copy it: he did not care how long it was (for I objected the length), he should be very happy to see *any thing by him*. Then pausing, and looking sad, he ejaculated "POOR SPENCER!" I begged to know the reason of his ejaculation, thinking that time had by this time softened down any calamities which the bard might have endured. "Why, poor fellow," said he, "he has lost his wife!" "Lost his wife!" said I, "whom are you talking of?" "Why, Spencer," said he; "I've read the *Monody* he wrote on the occasion, and *a very pretty thing it is*." This led to an explanation (it could be delayed no longer), that the sound Spenser, which, when poetry is talked of, generally excites an image of an old bard in a ruff, and sometimes with it dim notions of Sir P. Sydney, and perhaps Lord Burleigh, had raised in my gentleman a quite contrary image of the Honourable William Spencer, who has translated some things from the German very prettily, which are published with Lady Di. Beauclerk's designs. Nothing like

defining of terms when we talk. What blunders might I have fallen into of quite inapplicable criticism, but for this timely explanation!

N.B. At the beginning of *Edm.* Spenser (to prevent mistakes), I have copied from my own copy, and primarily from a book of Chalmers's on Shakspeare, a sonnet of Spenser's never printed among his poems. It is curious, as being manly, and rather Miltonic, and as a sonnet of Spenser's with nothing in it about love or knighthood. I have no room for remembrances; but I hope our doing your commission will prove we do not quite forget you. C. L.

CXXXV. TO W. HAZLITT

[January—February, 1806.]

Dear H.,—I send you Tingry (pro[mising you instruction] and [some] entertainment). I should not have delayed it [so] long, but have been waiting for Loftus's commission. I have made several graphical tours round and in the metropolis without discovering any trees that I would venture to recommend: id est, I have gone no further than the shop [window], for such is my modesty, that if I explored internal se[crets I] should be laying out complimentary shillings rather than give trouble without remuneration. I have sent you a pretty emblematical thing which I happen to have in my possession: you may get some hints from it, though perhaps you may think it too tame: not sufficiently romantic,—the boughs not shooting fantastically enough, &c. But to supply poetry and wildness, you may read the *American Farmer* over again. Nevertheless, if you desire it, I will put my head within the shops—only speak your wants.

N.B.—If I do not hear in 4 days that you have received Tingry &c., safe, I shall put you to the

expence of a Letter to ascertain whether this parcel have [*sic*] been deliver'd to you.

Yours ever,

C. L.

Johnson shall not be forgot at his month's end.

CXXXVI. TO THE SAME

Feb. 19th, 1806.

Dear H.,—Godwin has just been here in his way from Johnson's. Johnson has had a fire in his house; this happened about five weeks ago; it was in the day time, so it did not burn the house down, but it did so much damage that the house must come down, to be repaired. His nephew that we met on Hampstead Hill put it out. Well, this fire has put him so back, that he craves one more month before he gives you an answer. I will certainly goad Godwin (if necessary) to go again this very day four weeks; but I am confident he will want no goading. Three or four most capital auctions of pictures are advertised: in May, *Wellbore Ellis Agar's*, the first private collection in England, so Holcroft says; in March, Sir George Young's in Stratford Place, (where Cosway lives,) and a Mr Hulse's at Blackheath, both very capital collections, and have been announced for some months. Also the Marquis of Lansdowne's pictures in March; and though inferior to mention, lastly, the Tructhsessian Gallery. Don't your mouth water to be here? T'other night Loftus called, whom we have not seen since you went before. We meditate a stroll next Wednesday, fast-day. He happened to light upon Mr Holcroft, wife, and daughter, their first visit at our house. Your brother called last night. We keep up our intimacy. He is going to begin a large Madonna and child from Mrs H. and baby. I fear he goes astray after *ignes fatui*. He is

a clever man. By the by, I saw a miniature of his as far excelling any in his show cupboard (that of your sister not excepted) as that show cupboard excels the show things you see in windows—an old woman, (d . . n her name!) but most superlative; he has it to clean — I'll ask him the name—but the best miniature I ever saw. But for oil pictures!—what has he to do with Madonnas? If the Virgin Mary were alive and visitable, he would not hazard himself in a Covent Garden pit-door crowd to see her. It isn't his style of beauty, is it? But he will go on painting things he ought not to paint, and not painting things he ought to paint. Manning is not gone to China, but talks of going this Spring. God forbid! Coleridge not heard of. I am going to leave off smoke. In the meantime I am so smoky with last night's ten pipes, that I must leave off. Mary begs her kind remembrances. Pray write to us. This is no letter; but I supposed you grew anxious about Johnson.

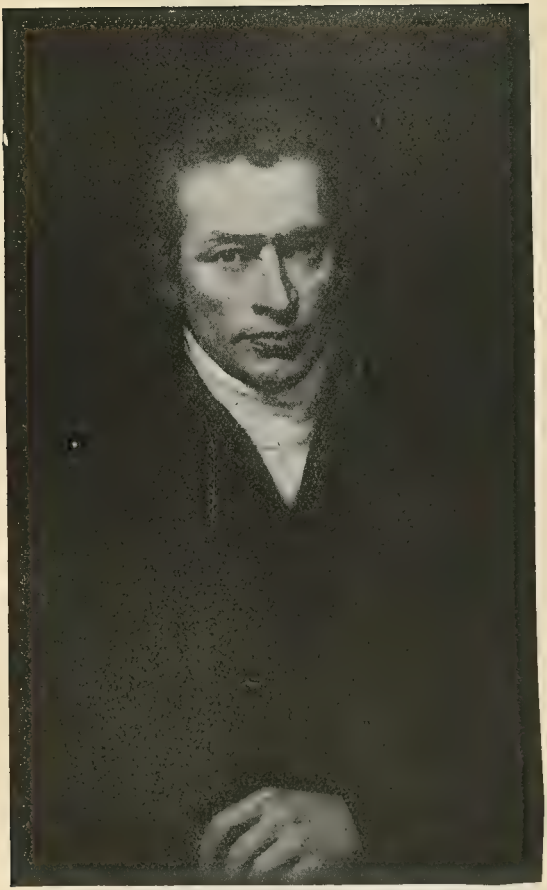
N.B.—Have taken a room at three shillings a-week, to be in between five and eight at night, to avoid my *nocturnal*, alias *knock-eternal*, visitors. The first-fruits of my retirement has been a farce, which goes to manager to-morrow. *Wish my ticket luck.* God bless you; and do write.—Yours, *fumosissimus*,

C. Lamb.

CXXVII. TO JOHN RICKMAN

March 1806.

Dear Rickman,—I send you some papers about a salt-water soap, for which the inventor is desirous of getting a parliamentary reward, like Dr Jenner. Whether such a project be feasible, I mainly doubt, taking for granted the equal utility. I should suppose the usual way of paying such projectors is by patent and contracts. The patent, you see, he has got. A contract he is about with the Navy Board.



Thomas Holcroft, from the painting by John Opie, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

Meantime, the projector is hungry. Will you answer me two questions, and return them with the papers as soon as you can? Imprimis, is there any chance of success in application to Parliament for a reward? Did you ever hear of the invention? You see its benefits and saving to the nation (always the first motive with a true projector) are feelingly set forth: the last paragraph but one of the estimate, in enumerating the shifts poor seamen are put to, even approaches to the pathetic. But, agreeing to all he says, is there the remotest chance of Parliament giving the projector any thing? And *when* should application be made, now, or after a report (if he can get it) from the Navy Board? Secondly, let the infeasibility be as great as you will, you will oblige me by telling me the way of introducing such an application in Parliament, without buying over a majority of members, which is totally out of projector's power. I vouch nothing for the soap myself; for I always wash in *fresh water*, and find it answer tolerably well for all purposes of cleanliness; nor do I know the projector; but a relation of mine has put me on writing to you, for whose parliamentary knowledge he has great veneration.

P.S. The Capt. and Mrs Burney and Phillips take their chance at cribbage here on Wednesday. Will you and Mrs R. join the party? Mary desires her compliments to Mrs R., and joins in the invitation.

Yours truly,

C. Lamb.

CXXXVIII. TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

March 15th, 1806.

Dear H.,—I am a little surprised at no letter from you. This day week, to wit, Saturday, the 8th of March, 1806, I booked off by the Wem coach, Bull and Mouth Inn, directed to *you*, at the Rev. Mr Hazlitt's, Wem, Shropshire, a parcel containing, be-

sides a book, &c., a rare print, which I take to be a Titian; begging the said W. H. to acknowledge the receipt thereof; which he not having done, I conclude the said parcel to be lying at the inn, and may be lost; for which reason, lest you may be a Wales-hunting at this instant, I have authorized any of your family, whosoever first gets this, to open it, that so precious a parcel may not moulder away for want of looking after.

What do you in Shropshire when so many fine pictures are a-going a-going every day in London? Monday I visit the Marquis of Lansdowne's, in Berkeley Square. Catalogue 2*s.* 6*d.* Leonardos in plenty. Some other day this week I go to see Sir Wm. Young's, in Stratford Place. Hulse's, of Blackheath, are also to be sold this month; and in May, the first private collection in Europe, Welbore Ellis Agar's. And there are you, perverting Nature in lying landscapes, filched from old rusty Titians, such as I can scrape up here to send you, with an additament from Shropshire Nature thrown in to make the whole look unnatural. I am afraid of your mouth watering when I tell you that Manning and I got into Angerstein's on Wednesday. *Mon Dieu!* Such Claude's! Four Claudes bought for more than £10,000; (those who talk of Wilson being equal to Claude are either mainly ignorant or stupid;) one of these was perfectly miraculous. What colours short of *bonâ fide* sunbeams it could be painted in, I am not earthly colourman enough to say; but I did not think it had been in the possibility of things. Then, a music piece by Titian, a thousand-pound picture, five figures standing behind a piano, the sixth playing—none of the heads, as M. observed, indicating great men, or affecting it, but so sweetly disposed—all leaning separate ways, but so easy—like a flock of some divine shepherd; the colouring, like the economy of the picture, so sweet and harmonious

—as good as Shakspeare's *Twelfth Night*, *almost*, that is. It will give you a love of order, and cure you of restless, fidgety passions for a week after—more musical than the music which it would, but cannot, yet in a manner *does*, show. I have no room for the rest. Let me say, Angerstein sits in a room—his study (only that and the library are shown), when he writes a common letter, as I am doing, surrounded with twenty pictures worth £60,000. What a luxury! Apicius and Heliogabalus, hide your diminished heads!

Yours, my dear painter,

C. Lamb.

Mr Wm. Hazlitt,
Wem, Shropshire.
In his absence, to be opened immediately.

CXXXIX. TO THOMAS MANNING

May 10th, 1806.

My dear Manning,—I didn't know what your going was till I shook a last fist with you, and then 'twas just like having shaken hands with a wretch on the fatal scaffold, and when you are down the ladder, you can never stretch out to him again. Mary says you are dead, and there's nothing to do but to leave it to time to do for us in the end what it always does for those who mourn for people in such a case. But she'll see by your letter you are not quite dead. A little kicking and agony, and then——Martin Burney *took me out* a walking that evening, and we talked of Mister Manning; and then I came home and smoked for you, and at twelve o'Clock came home Mary and Monkey Lousia from the play, and there was more talk & more smoking, and they all seemed first-rate characters, because they knew a certain person. But what's the use of talking about 'em? By the time

you'll have made your escape from the Kalmuks, you'll have staid so long I shall never be able to bring to your mind who Mary was, who will have died about a year before, nor who the Holcrofts were! me perhaps you will mistake for Phillips, or confound me with Mr Daw, because you saw us together. Mary (whom you seem to remember yet) is not quite easy that she had not a formal parting from you. I wish it had so happened. But you must bring her a token, a shawl or something, and remember a sprightly little Mandarin for our mantle piece, as a companion to the Child I am going to purchase at the Museum. She says you saw her writings about the other day, and she wishes you should know what they are. She is doing for Godwin's bookseller twenty of Shakspear's plays, to be made into Children's tales. Six are already done by her, to wit, "The Tempest," "Winter's Tale," "Midsummer Night," "Much Ado," "Two Gentlemen of Verona," and "Cymbeline": and "The Merchant of Venice" is in forwardness. I have done "Othello" and "Macbeth," and mean to do all the Tragedies. I think it will be popular among the little people. Besides money. It's to bring in 60 guineas. Mary has done them capitally, I think you'd think. These are the humble amusements we propose, while you are gone to plant the cross of Christ among barbarous Pagan anthropophagi. Quam homo homini præstat! but then, perhaps, you'll get murdered, and we shall die in our beds with a fair literary reputation. Be sure, if you see any of those people, whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders, that you make a draught of them. It will be very curious. O Manning, I am serious to thinking almost, when I think that all those evenings, which you have made so pleasant, are gone perhaps for ever. Four years you talk of, maybe ten, and you may come back and find such alterations! Some circumstance may grow

up to you or to me, that may be a bar to the return of any such intimacy. I dare say all this is Hum, and that all will come back; but indeed we die many deaths before we die, and I am almost sick when I think that such a hold as I had of you is gone. I have friends, but some of 'em are changed. Marriage, or some circumstance, rises up to make them not the same. But I felt sure of you. And that last token you gave me of expressing a wish to have my name joined with yours, you know not how it affected me: like a legacy.

God bless you in every way you can form a wish. May He give you health, and safety, and the accomplishment of all your objects, and return you again to us, to gladden some fireside or other (I suppose we shall be moved from the Temple). I will nurse the remembrance of your steadiness and quiet, which used to infuse something like itself into our nervous minds. Mary called you our ventilator. Farewell, and take her best wishes and mine.

One thing more. When you get to Canton, you will most likely see a young friend of mine, Inspector of Teas, named Ball. He is a very good fellow & I should like to have my name talked of in China Give my kind remembrances to the same Ball.

Good bye,
C. L.

Mr Manning,
Passenger
On board the Thames
East Indiaman,
Portsmouth.

CXL. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

About June 20, 1806.

Dear Wordsworth,—We are pleased, you may be sure, with the good news of Mrs W——. Hope all is

well over by this time. "A fine boy. Have you any more?—one more and a girl—poor copies of me!" vide *Mr H.*, a farce which the proprietors have done me the honour——; but I will set down Mr Wroughton's own words. N.B. The ensuing letter was sent in answer to one which I wrote, begging to know if my piece had any chance, as I might make alterations, &c. I writing on Monday, there comes this letter on the Wednesday. Attend!

[Copy of a Letter from Mr R. Wroughton.]

"Sir,—Your piece of *Mr H.*, I am desired to say, is accepted at Drury Lane Theatre, by the proprietors, and, if agreeable to you, will be brought forwards when the proper opportunity serves. The piece shall be sent to you, for your alterations, in the course of a few days, as the same is not in my hands, but with the proprietors.

"I am, sir, your obedient servant,

"RICHARD WROUGHTON.

[Dated]
"66, Gower Street,
"Wednesday, June 11, 1806."

On the following Sunday Mr Tobin comes. The scent of a manager's letter brought him. He would have gone further any day on such a business. I read the letter to him. He deems it authentic and peremptory. Our conversation naturally fell upon pieces, different sorts of pieces; what is the best way of offering a piece, how far the caprice of managers is an obstacle in the way of a piece, how to judge of the merits of a piece, how long a piece may remain in the hands of the managers before it is acted; and my piece, and your piece, and my poor brother's piece—my poor brother was all his life endeavouring to get a piece accepted. I am not sure that, when my poor brother bequeathed the care of his pieces to Mr Tobin, he did not therein convey a legacy which

in some measure mollified the otherwise first stupefactions of grief. It cannot be expected that the present Earl Nelson passes all his time in watering the laurels of the admiral with Right-Reverend Tears. Certainly he steals a fine day now and then to plot how to lay out the grounds and mansion at Burnham most suitable to the late Earl's taste, if he had lived, and how to spend the hundred thousand pounds which Parliament has given him in erecting some little neat monument to his memory.

I wrote *Mr H.* in mere wantonness of triumph. Have nothing more to say about it. The managers, I thank my stars, have decided its merits for ever. They are the best judges of pieces, and it would be insensible in me to affect a false modesty after the very flattering letter which I have received.

ADMIT
TO
BOXES.
MR. H.
Ninth Night.
CHARLES LAMB.

I think this will be as good a pattern for orders as I can think on. A little thin flowery border, round, neat, not gaudy, and the Drury Lane Apollo, with the harp at the top. Or shall I have no Apollo? —simply nothing? Or perhaps the comic muse?

The same form, only I think without the Apollo, will serve for the pit and galleries. I think it will be best to write my name at full length; but then if I give away a great many, that will be tedious. Perhaps *Ch. Lamb* will do.

BOXES, now I think on it, I'll have in capitals. The rest, in a neat Italian hand. Or better, perhaps Boxes, in old English characters, like "Madoc" or "Thalaba"? C. L.

CXLI. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

June 26th, 1806.

Mary is just stuck fast in "All's Well that Ends Well." She complains of having to set forth so many female characters in boys' clothes. She begins to think Shakspeare must have wanted imagination! I, to encourage her, (for she often faints in the prosecution of her great work,) flatter her with telling her how well such a play and such a play is done. But she is stuck fast, and I have been obliged to promise to assist her. To do this, it will be necessary to leave off tobacco. But I had some thoughts of doing that before, for I sometimes think it does not agree with me. Wm. Hazlitt is in town. I took him to see a very pretty girl, professedly, where there were two young girls; (the very head and sum of the girlery was two young girls;) they neither laughed, nor sneered, nor giggled, nor whispered—but they were young girls—and he sat and frowned blacker and blacker, indignant that there should be such a thing as youth and beauty, till he tore me away before supper, in perfect misery, and owned he could not bear young girls; they drove him mad. So I took him home to my old nurse, where he recovered perfect tranquillity. Independent of this, and as I am not a young girl myself, he is a great acquisition to us. He is, rather imprudently I think, printing a political pamphlet on his own account, and will have to pay for the paper, &c. The first duty of an author, I take it, is never to pay any thing. But *non cuivis contigit adire Corinthum.* The managers, I thank my stars, have settled that question for me.

Yours truly, C. Lamb.

CXLII. TO THOMAS MANNING

December 5th, 1806.

Manning, your letter dated Hottentots, August (the what-was-it?) came to hand. I can scarce hope that mine will have the same luck. China! Canton! Bless us—how it strains the imagination and makes it ache! I write under another uncertainty, whether it can go to-morrow by a ship which I have just learned is going off direct to your part of the world, or whether the despatches may not be sealed up and this have to wait, for if it is detained here, it will grow staler in a fortnight than in a five months' voyage coming to you. It will be a point of conscience to send you none but bran-new news (the latest edition), which, like oranges, will but grow the better for a sea voyage. Oh that you should be so many hemispheres off!—if I speak incorrectly you can correct me—why the simplest death or marriage that takes place here must be important to you as news in the old Bastile. There's your friend Tuthill has got away from France; you remember France? and Tuthill?—ten to one he writes by this post, if he don't get my note in time, apprising him of the vessel's sailing. Know then that he has found means to obtain leave from Buonaparte (without making use of any *incredible romantic pretences* as some have done, who never meant to fulfil them,) to come home, and I have seen him here at Holcroft's. Ar'n't you glad about Tuthill? Now then be sorry for Holcroft, whose new play, called the *Vindictive Man*, was damned about a fortnight since. It died in part of its own weakness, and in part for being choked up with bad actors. The two principal parts were destined to Mrs Jordan and Mr Bannister, but Mrs J. has not come to terms with the managers; they have had some squabble; and Bannister shot some of his fingers off by the going off of a gun. So Miss Duncan had

her part, and Mr de Camp took his. His part, the principal comic hope of the play, was most unluckily *Goldfinch*, taken out of the *Road to Ruin*, not only the same character, but the identical *Goldfinch*—the same as *Falstaff* is in two plays of Shakspeare's. As the devil of ill-luck would have it, half the audience did not know that Holcroft had written it, but were displeased at his stealing from the *Road to Ruin*; and those who might have borne a gentlemanly coxcomb with his "That's your sort," "Go it"—such as Lewis is—did not relish the intolerable vulgarity and insanity of the idea stript of his manner. De Camp was hooted, more than hist, hooted and bellowed off the stage before the second act was finished; so that the remainder of his part was forced to be, with some violence to the play, omitted. In addition to this, a w . . . . was another principal character—a most unfortunate choice in this moral day. The audience were as scandalised as if you were to introduce such a personage to their private tea-tables. Besides, her action in the play was gross—wheedling an old man into marriage. But the mortal blunder of the play was that which, oddly enough, Holcroft took pride in, and exultingly told me of the night before it came out, that there were no less than eleven principal characters in it, and I believe he meant of the men only, for the play-bill expressed as much, not reckoning one woman, and one w . . . .; and true it was, for Mr Powell, Mr Raymond, Mr Bartlett, Mr H. Siddons, Mr Barrymore, &c., &c., to the number of eleven, had all parts equally prominent, and there was as much of them in quantity and rank as of the hero and heroine—and most of them gentlemen who seldom appear but as the hero's friend in a farce, for a minute or two; and here they all had their ten-minute speeches, and one of them gave the audience a serious account of how he was now a lawyer but

had been a poet, and then a long enumeration of the inconveniences of authorship, rascally booksellers, reviewers, &c.; which first set the audience a gaping; but I have said enough. You will be so sorry, that you will not think the best of me for my detail; but news is news at Canton. Poor Holcroft I fear will feel the disappointment very seriously in a pecuniary light. From what I can learn he has saved nothing. You and I were hoping one day that he had, but I fear he has nothing but his pictures and books, and a no very flourishing business, and to be obliged to part with his long-necked Guido that hangs opposite as you enter, and the game-piece that hangs in the back drawing-room, and all those Vandykes, &c. God should temper the wind to the shorn connoisseur. I hope I need not say to you, that I feel for the weather-beaten author, and for all his household. I assure you his fate has soured a good deal the pleasure I should have otherwise taken in my own little farce being accepted, and I hope about to be acted: it is in rehearsal actually, and I expect it to come out next week. It is kept a sort of secret, and the rehearsals have gone on privately, lest by many folks knowing it, the story should come out, which would infallibly damn it. You remember I had sent it before you went. Wroughton read it, and was much pleased with it. I speedily got an answer. I took it to make alterations, and lazily kept it some months, then took courage and furbished it up in a day or two and took it. In less than a fortnight I heard the principal part was given to Elliston, who liked it and only wanted a prologue, which I have since done and sent, and I had a note the day before yesterday from the manager, Wroughton, (bless his fat face! he is not a bad actor in some things,) to say that I should be summoned to the rehearsal after the next, which next was to be yesterday. I had no idea it was so forward. I have had no trouble, attended

no reading or rehearsal, made no interest. What a contrast to the usual parade of authors! But it is peculiar to modesty to do all things without noise or pomp. I have some suspicion it will appear in public on Wednesday next, for Wroughton says in his note, it is so forward that if wanted it may come out next week, and a new melodrame is announced for every day till then; and "a new farce is in rehearsal," is put up in the bills. Now you'd like to know the subject. The title is *Mr H.*, no more. How simple, how taking! A great H. sprawling over the play-bill and attracting eyes at every corner. The story is a coxcomb appearing at Bath, vastly rich — all the ladies dying for him—all bursting to know who he is; but he goes by no other name than Mr H.—a curiosity like that of the dames of Strasburg about the man with the great nose. But I won't tell you any more about it. Yes, I will; but I can't give you an idea how I have done it. I'll just tell you that after much vehement admiration, when his true name comes out, "Hogsflesh," all the women shun him, avoid him, and not one can be found to change their name for him. That's the idea. How flat it is here —but how whimsical in the farce! And only think how hard upon me it is that the ship is despatched tomorrow, and my triumph cannot be ascertained till the Wednesday after; but all China will ring of it by and by. N.B. (But this is a secret.) The Professor has got a tragedy coming out, with the young Roscius in it, in January next, as we say—January last it will be with you—and though it is a profound secret now, as all his affairs are, it cannot be much of one by the time you read this. However, don't let it go any further. I understand there are dramatic exhibitions in China. One would not like to be forestalled. Do you find in all this stuff I have written any thing like those feelings which one should send my old adventuring friend, that is gone to wander among Tartars and

may never come again? I don't; but your going away, and all about you, is a threadbare topic. I have worn it out with thinking: it has come to me when I have been dull with any thing, till my sadness has seemed more to have come from it than to have introduced it. I want you, you don't know how much; but if I had you here in my European garret, we should but talk over such stuff as I have written —so. Those *Tales from Shakspeare* are near coming out, and Mary has begun a new work. Mr Dawe is turned author; he has been in such a way lately—Dawe, the painter, I mean—he sits and stands about at Holcroft's and says nothing; then sighs and leans his head on his hand. I took him to be in love; but it seems he was only meditating a work,—"The Life of Moreland." The young man is not used to composition. Rickman and Captain Burney are well; they assemble at my house pretty regularly of a Wednesday —a new institution. Like other great men I have a public day, cribbage and pipes, with Phillips and noisy Martin.

Good God! what a bit only I've got left! How shall I squeeze all I know into this morsel! Coleridge is come home, and is going to turn lecturer on taste at the Royal Institution. I shall get £200 from the theatre if *Mr H.* has a good run, and I hope £100 for the copyright. Nothing if it fails; and there never was a more ticklish thing. The whole depends on the manner in which the name is brought out, which I value myself on, as a *chef-d'œuvre*. How the paper grows less and less! In less than two minutes I shall cease to talk to you, and you may rave to the great wall of China. N.B. Is there such a wall? Is it as big as Old London Wall, by Bedlam? Have you met with a friend of mine, named Ball, at Canton? If you are acquainted, remember me kindly to him. May be you'll think I have not said enough of Tuthill and the Holcrofts.

Tuthill is a noble fellow, as far as I can judge. The H.'s bear their disappointment pretty well, but indeed they are sadly mortified. Mrs H. is cast down. It was well, if it were but on this account, that T. is come home. N.B. If my little thing don't succeed I shall easily survive, having, as it were, compared to H.'s venture, but a sixteenth in the lottery. Mary and I are to sit next the orchestra in the pit, next the tweedledees. She remembers you. You are more to us than five hundred farces, clappings, &c.

Come back one day. C. LAMB.

CXLIII. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

December 11th, 1806.

Mary's love to all of you—I wouldn't let her write.

Dear Wordsworth,—*Mr H.* came out last night, and failed. I had many fears; the subject was not substantial enough. John Bull must have solider fare than a *letter*. We are pretty stout about it; have had plenty of condoling friends; but, after all, we had rather it should have succeeded. You will see the prologue in most of the morning papers. It was received with such shouts as I never witnessed to a prologue. It was attempted to be encored. How hard!—a thing I did merely as a task, because it was wanted, and set no great store by; and *Mr H.!!* The number of friends we had in the house—my brother and I being in public offices, &c. — was astonishing, but they yielded at length to a few hisses.

A hundred hisses! (Damn the word, I write it like kisses—how different!)—a hundred hisses outweigh a thousand claps. The former come more

directly from the heart. Well, 'tis withdrawn, and there is an end.

Better luck to us. C. LAMB.

[Turn over.]

P.S. Pray, when any of you write to the Clarksons, give our kind loves, and say we shall not be able to come and see them at Christmas, as I shall have but a day or two, and tell them we bear our mortification pretty well.

CXLIV. TO SARAH STODDART

11th Dec. [1806.]

Don't mind this being a queer letter. I am in haste, and taken up by visitors, condolers, &c.

God bless you.

Dear Sarah,—Mary is a little cut at the ill success of *Mr H.* which came out last night and *failed.* I know you'll be sorry, but never mind. We are determined not to be cast down. I am going to leave off tobacco, and then we must thrive. A smoking man must write smoky farces.

Mary is pretty well, but I persuaded her to let me write. We did not apprise you of the coming out of *Mr H.* for fear of ill luck. You were much better out of the house. If it had taken, your partaking of our good luck would have been one of our greatest joys. As it is, we shall expect you at the time you mentioned. But whenever you come you shall be most welcome.

God bless you, dear Sarah,

Yours most truly, C. L.

Mary is by no means unwell, but I made her let me write.

CXLV. MISS LAMB TO MRS CLARKSON

Tuesday Decr. 23. 1806.

My dear Mrs Clarkson,—You are very kind to say you are out of humour with yourself for not writing before, but I beg you will never be so again. I know so well, and often feel so badly, how tiresome writing sometimes is, that I intreat you will never write but when you will feel yourself quite inclined—I tried the morning after the failure of our little farce to write a line, but you know its ill success and how stoutly we meant to bear it, but I found myself utterly incapable of writing one connected sentence, so that was the philosophy I wished to boast of.

I do not love to throw the blame of the ill success of a piece upon the actors—it is a common trick with unsuccessful dramatists. The blame rested chiefly with Charles, and yet should not be called blame, for is was mere ignorance of stage effect—and I am mistaken if he has not gained much useful knowledge, more than he would have learned from a constant attendance at the representations of other people's pieces, by seeing his own fail; he seems perfectly aware why, and from what cause it failed. He intends to write one more with all his dear bought experience in his head, and should that share the same fate, he will then turn his mind to some other pursuit.

I am happy to hear so good an account of your health; go on improving as fast as you can, that I may find you quite well. At Easter, or a few weeks after I hope to spend a delightful holliday with you at Bury; if we come at Easter we cannot stay longer than one week; if we defer our journey, we can make a much longer visit, but at present I know not how it will be settled, for my brother sometimes threatens to pass his hollidays in town hunting over old plays at the Museum to extract passages for a

work (a collection of poetry) Mr Wordsworth intends to publish. However, I hope before that time arrives, he will be able to borrow the books of some good old collector of those hidden treasures, and thus they can be copied at home and much of Charles' labour and time saved. The Museum is only open during his office hours. I am much pleased with your friend Henry Robinson. He has been truly kind and friendly about the farce.

That disappointment is wearing out of our heads very fast. My brother means to keep at home very much this winter, and work very hard. When he is at work, he is always happier and in better health.

I am glad Miss Smith is with you, because Coleridge has told me she is the best good girl in the world.

I am pleased to hear again the name of your old neighbour Mr Smith. I well remember him the first season of the School for Scandal; he was ("I being a young thing then") a prodigious favourite with me. I cannot for the life of me conceive of him as an old man. *O what actors there were then!* but as I said before, disappointed authors must not complain of actors—(you shall see the piece when I can spare time to write a copy, or can spare the only one we have. No matter for the *brains* of your good townspeople. Go amongst them as much as you can, I am sure company is a certain cure for your malady.

I am glad to hear of my friend Tom's improvement; never mind his learning, that will come in due time. Indeed I have reasons for wishing him a little backward in that respect, for I have a little book I mean to send him and the printer has been so long bringing it out I began to fear Tom would attain so much knowledge as to outgrow the use thereof, and Tom's approbation of my first production was one of the things I built upon. I suppose I may send a parcel by the Bury stage? That is a foolish question to ask, for no doubt I may.

I rejoice to hear Mr Clarkson has begun his history of the Abolition—May we not expect to see him now in a few days—How I wish he would bring you too.

We are to stay at home and work, as I forget it is Christmas, but we sincerely wish you a *merry* happy Christmas and many many happy *healthy* new years.

Charles' kindest respects to you and Mr Clarkson and young Tom and Miss Buck; Is she not at Bury? I remain your affectionate friend,

M. Lamb.

No news of Coleridge lately.

I shall rejoice to hear from you, whenever you feel writing quite pleasant to you. *Did you ever see such a queer scrawl as mine?*

[*Endorsed*]

Mrs Clarkson,
Bury St Edmonds,
Suffolk.

CXLVI. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Thursday, 29th Jan. 1807.

Dear Wordsworth — We have book'd off from Swan and Two Necks, Lad Lane, this day (per Coach) the Tales from Shakespear. You will forgive the plates, when I tell you they were left to the direction of Godwin, who left the choice of subjects to the bad baby, who from mischief (I suppose) has chosen one from damn'd beastly vulgarity (vide *Merch. Venice*) where no atom of authority was in the tale to justify it; to another has given a name which exists not in the tale, Nic Bottom, and which she thought would be funny, though in this I suspect *his* hand, for I guess her reading does not reach far enough to know Bottom's christian name; and one of Hamlet and grave digging, a scene which is not hinted at in the

H. Crabb Robinson, from an engraving after a pencil sketch from life September 4th, 1862, at the Athenæum Club, by G. Scharf, F.S.A.

story, and you might as well have put King Canute the Great reproving his courtiers. The rest are giants and giantesses. Suffice it, to save our taste and damn our folly, that we left it all to a friend. W. G., who in the first place cheated me into putting a name to them, which I did not mean, but do not repent, and then wrote a puff about their *simplicity*, &c. to go with the advertisement as in my name! Enough of this egregious dupery. I will try to abstract the load of teazing circumstances from the stories and tell you that I am answerable for *Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Timon*, *Romeo*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, for occasionally a tail-piece or correction of grammar, for none of the cuts and all of the spelling. The rest is my Sister's. ——We think Pericles of hers the best, and Othello of mine; but I hope all have some good. *As you like It*, we like least. So much, only begging you to tear out the cuts and give them to Johnny, as "Mrs Godwin's fancy"!!— C. L.

Our love to all.

I had almost forgot, My part of the Preface begins in the middle of a sentence, in last but one page, after a colon, thus—

:—*which if they be happily so done, &c.*

the former part hath a more feminine turn and does hold me up something as an instructor to young ladies: but upon my modesty's honour, I wrote it not.

Godwin told my Sister that the Baby chose the subjects: a fact in taste.

CXLVII. TO JOSEPH HUME

29 Dec., 1807.

Alas, sir, I cannot be among you. My fate is still not to know on which side my bread is butter'd. I hang between two Engagements perpetually, and the worst always comes first. The Devil always takes care to clap in with a retainer when he sees God about to offer a fee — cold bones of mutton and leather-roasted potatoes at Pimlico at ten must carry it away from a certain Turkey and a contingent plumb-pudding at Montpelier at four (I always spell plumb-pudding with a *b*, p-l-u-m-*b*—I think it reads fatter and more suetty).

I suppose you know what has happen'd to our poor friend Hazlitt. If not, take it as I read it in the Morning Post or Fashionable World of this morning :—

"Last night Mr H., a portrait painter in Southampton Buildings, Holborn, put an end to his existence by cutting his throat in a shocking manner. It is supposed that he must have committed his purpose with a pallet-knife, as the edges of the cicatrice or wound were found besmeared with a yellow consistence, but the knife could not be found. The reasons of this rash act are not assigned; an unfortunate passion has been mentioned; but nothing certain is known. The deceased was subject to hypochondria, low spirits, but he had lately seemed better, having paid more than usual attention to his dress and person. Besides being a painter, he had written some pretty things in prose and verse."

God bless me, ten o'clock! I have cut out the paragraph, and will shew it you entire. I have not time to transcribe more.

Yours,

C. Lamb.

CXLVIII. TO THE SAME

12 January, 1808.

Dear Sir,—The strange rumours which have been spread about since the death of our respected friend, as well as some things which have come under my own observation, which I do not care to trust to the ordinary communication of a Post, but reserve them for the especial confidence of your most valued ear in private,—these things, without much help from a rainy day or time of the year which usually disposes men to sadness, have contributed to make me not a little serious and thoughtful of late. I have run over in my mind the various treatises which I have perused in the course of a studious, and, I hope, innocently employed life, on the nature of disembodied Spirits and the causes of their revisiting the earth. The fact I will take for granted; presuming that I am not addressing an Atheist. I find the most commonly assigned reason to be, *for the revealing of hidden Treasures which the Deceased had hoarded up in his or her Lifetime*. Now though I cannot sufficiently admire the providence of God who by this means has oft-times restored great heaps of Gold and Silver to the circulation of the Living, thereby sparing the iterately plowed and now almost effœte wombs of Peru & Mexico, which would need another Sarah's miracle to replenish, yet in the particular case of the Defunct I cannot but suspect some other cause, and not this, to have called him from his six foot bed of earth. For it is highly improbable that he should have accumulated any such vast treasures, for the revealing of which a miracle was needed, without some suspicion of the fact among his friends during his Life-time. I for my part always looked upon our dear friend as a man rich rather in the gifts of his mind than in earthly treasures. He had few rents or comings in, that I was ever aware of, small (if any)

landed property, and by all that I could witness he subsisted more upon the well-timed contributions of a few chosen friends who knew his worth, than upon any Estate which could properly be called his own. I myself have contributed my part. God knows, I speak not this in reproach. I have never taken, nor indeed did the deceased offer, any *written acknowledgments* of the various sums which he has had of me, by which I could make the fact manifest to the legal eye of an Executor or Administrator. He was not a Man to affect these niceties in his transactions with his friends. He would often say, money was nothing between intimate acquaintances, that Golden Streams had no Ebb, that a Purse mouth never regorged, that God loved a chearful giver but the Devil hated a free taker, that a paid Loan makes angels groan, with many such like sayings: he had always free and generous notions about money. His nearest friends know this best. Induced by these considerations I give up that commonly received notion of Revealable Treasures in our friend's case. Neither am I too forward to adopt that vulgar superstition of some hidden Murder to be brought to light; which yet I do not universally reject: for when I revolve, that the Defunct was naturally of a discoursible and communicative temper (though of a gloomy and close aspect, as born under Saturn), a great repeater of conversations which he generally carried away verbatim and would repeat with syllabic exactness in the next company where he was received (by which means I that have staid at home have often reaped the profit of his travels without stirring from my elbow chair), I cannot think that if He had been present at so remarkable circumstance as a murder he would so soon have forgotten it as to make no mention of it at the next place where he dined or supt, or that he could have restrained himself from giving the particulars of a matter of fact like that in his life time. I am sure I have often

heard him dilate upon occurrences of a much less interesting sort than that in question. I am most inclined to support that opinion which favors the Establishing of some Speculative Point in Religion: a frequent cause, says Wierus, for Spirits returning to the Earth, to confute Atheists, &c. When I consider the Education which our friend received from a venerable Parent, his religious destination, his nurture at a Seminary appropriated to young Ministers: but whatever the cause of this re-appearance may prove to be, we may now with truth assert that our deceased friend has attained to one object of his pursuits, one hour's separate existence gives a dead man clearer notions of metaphysics than all the treatises which in this state of carnal entanglement the least-immersed spirit can out-spin. It is good to leave such subjects to that period when we shall have no Heads to ache, no brains to distort, no faces to lengthen, no clothes to neglect. Had our dear friend attended to this, he might have shewn his airy form in courts and ball rooms, whispered the fair, ogled, sung, danced, and known just as much of those subjects as it is probable he ever knew previous to his death: for I always take it, that a disposition to such sort of enquiries . . . and ends in lunacy and dirty linen. You have my opinions.

[No signature.]

[*Endorsed*]
J. Hume, Esq.
Victualling Office,
Somerset House.

CXLIX. TO THE REV. W. HAZLITT

Temple, 18th February, 1808.

Sir,—I am truly concerned that any mistake of mine should have caused you uneasiness, but I hope we have got a clue to William's absence, which may

clear up all apprehensions. The people where he lodges in town have received direction from him to forward some linen to a place called Winterslow, in the county of Wilts, (not far from Salisbury,) where the lady lives, whose cottage, pictured upon a card, if you opened my letter you have doubtless seen; and though we have had no explanation of the mystery since, we shrewdly suspect that at the time of writing that letter which has given you all this trouble, a certain son of yours (who is both painter and author) was at her elbow, and did assist in framing that very cartoon which was sent to amuse and mislead us in town, as to the real place of his destination. And some words at the back of the said cartoon, which we had not marked so narrowly before, by the similarity of the handwriting to William's, do very much confirm the suspicion. If our theory be right, they have had the pleasure of their jest, and I am afraid you have paid for it in anxiety. But I hope your uneasiness will now be removed, and you will pardon a suspense occasioned by Love, who does so many worse mischiefs every day.

The letter to the people where William lodges says, moreover, that he shall be in town in a fortnight.

My sister joins in respects to you and Mrs Hazlitt, and in our kindest remembrances and wishes for the restoration of Peggy's health.

I am, Sir, your humble servant.

Ch. Lamb.

Rev. W. Hazlitt, Wem, Shropshire.

CL. TO THOMAS MANNING

26th Feb. 1808.

Dear Missionary,—Your letters from the farthest ends of the world have arrived safe. Mary is very thankful for your remembrance of her; and with the

less suspicion of mercenariness, as the silk, the *symbolum materiale* of your friendship, has not yet appeared. I think Horace says somewhere, *nox longa*. I would not impute negligence or unhandsome delays to a person whom you have honoured with your confidence, but I have not heard of the silk, or of Mr Knox, save by your letter. Maybe he expects the first advances! or it maybe that he has not succeeded in getting the article on shore, for it is among the *res prohibitæ et non nisi smuggle-ationis viâ fruendæ*. But so it is, in the friendships between *wicked men* the very expressions of their good-will cannot but be sinful. I suppose you know my farce was damned. The noise still rings in my ears. Were you ever in the pillory?—being damned is something like that. A treaty of marriage is on foot between William Hazlitt and Miss Stoddart. Something about settlements only retards it. She has somewhere about £80 a-year, to be £120 when her mother dies. He has no settlement except what he can claim from the Parish. *Pauper est Cinna, tamen sed amat*. The thing is therefore in abeyance. But there is love a-both sides. Little Fenwick (you don't see the connection of ideas here; how the devil should you?) is in the rules of the Fleet. Cruel creditors! operation of iniquitous laws. Is Magna Charta then a mockery? Why, in general (here I suppose you to ask a question) my spirits are pretty good; but I have my depressions, black as a smith's beard, Vulcanic, Stygian. At such times I have recourse to a pipe, which is like not being at home to a dun: he comes again with tenfold bitterness the next day.—(Mind, I am not in debt; I only borrow a similitude from others; it shows imagination.) I have done two books since the failure of my farce; they will both be out this Summer. The one is a juvenile book—the *Adventures of Ulysses*, intended to be an introduction to the reading of *Telemachus*! It is done out of the

Odyssey, not from the Greek, (I would not mislead you,) nor yet from Pope's *Odyssey*, but from an older translation of one Chapman. The *Shakspeare Tales* suggested the doing of it. Godwin is in both those cases my bookseller. The other is done for Longman, and is *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets contemporary with Shakspeare*. Specimens are becoming fashionable. We have "Specimens of Ancient English Poets," "Specimens of Modern English Poets," "Specimens of Ancient English Prose Writers," without end. They used to be called "Beauties." You have seen "Beauties of Shakspeare": so have many people that never saw any beauties in Shakspeare. Longman is to print it, and be at all the expense and risk, and I am to share the profits after all deductions; *i.e.* a year or two hence I must pocket what they please to tell me is due to me. But the book is such as I am glad there should be. It is done out of old plays at the Museum, and out of Dodsley's collection, &c. It is to have notes. So I go creeping on since I was lamed with that cursed fall from off the top of Drury Lane Theatre into the pit, something more than a year ago. However, I have been free of the house ever since, and the house was pretty free with me upon that occasion. Damn 'em, how they hissed! It was not a hiss neither, but a sort of a frantic yell, like a congregation of mad geese, with roaring sometimes, like bears, mows and mops like apes, sometimes snakes, that hiss'd me into madness. 'Twas like St Anthony's temptations. Mercy on us, that God should give his favourite children, men, mouths to speak with, to discourse rationally, to promise smoothly, to flatter agreeably, to encourage warmly, to counsel wisely, to sing with, to drink with, and to kiss with, and that they should turn them into mouths of adders, bears, wolves, hyenas, and whistle like tempests, and emit breath through them like dis-

tillations of aspic poison, to asperse and villify the innocent labours of their fellow-creatures who are desirous to please them! Heaven be pleased to make the breath stink and teeth rot out of them all therefore: make them a reproach, and all that pass by them to loll out their tongue at them! Blind mouths! as Milton somewhere calls them. Do you like Braham's singing? The little Jew has bewitched me. I follow him like as the boys followed Tom the Piper. He cures me of melancholy as David cured Saul: but I don't throw stones at him as Saul did at David in payment. I was insensible to music till he gave me a new sense. Oh that you could go to the new opera of *Kais* to-night! 'Tis all about Eastern manners; it would just suit you. It describes the wild Arabs, wandering Egyptians, lying dervises, and all that sort of people, to a hair. You needn't ha' gone so far to see what you see, if you saw it as I do every night at Drury Lane Theatre. Braham's singing, when it is impassioned, is finer than Mrs Siddons's or Mr Kemble's acting! and when it is not impassioned, it is as good as hearing a person of fine sense talking. The brave little Jew! Old Serjeant Hill is dead. Mrs Rickman is in the family way. It is thought that Hazlitt will have children if he marries Miss Stoddart. I made a pun the other day, and palmed it upon Holcroft, who grinned like a Cheshire cat. (Why do cats grin in Cheshire?—Because it was once a county palatine, and the cats cannot help laughing whenever they think of it, though I see no great joke in it.) I said that Holcroft, on being asked who were the best dramatic writers of the day, replied, "HOOK AND I." Mr Hook is author of several pieces, *Tekeli*, &c. You know what *hooks and eyes* are, don't you? They are what little boys do up their breeches with. Your letter had many things in it hard to be understood: the puns were ready and Swift-like; but

don't you begin to be melancholy in the midst of Eastern customs! "The mind does not easily conform to foreign usages, even in trifles: it requires something that it has been familiar with." That begins one of Dr Hawkesworth's papers in the *Adventurer*, and is I think, as sensible a remark as ever fell from the Doctor's mouth. White is at Christ's Hospital, a wit of the first magnitude, but would rather be thought a gentleman, like Congreve. You know Congreve's repulse which he gave to Voltaire, when he came to visit him as a *literary man*, that he wished to be considered only in the light of a private gentleman. I think the impertinent Frenchman was properly answered. I should just serve any member of the French Institute in the same manner, that wished to be introduced to me. Buonaparte has voted 5000 livres to Davy, the great young English Chemist! but it has not arrived. Coleridge has delivered two lectures at the Royal Institution; two more intended, but he did not come. It is thought he has gone sick upon them. He isn't well, that's certain. Wordsworth is coming to see him. He sits up in a two pair of stairs room at the *Courier* office, and receives visitors. . . .

Does any one read at Canton? Lord Moira is President of the Westminster Library. I suppose you might have interest with Sir Joseph Banks to get to be president of any similar institution that should be set up at Canton. I think public reading-rooms the best mode of educating young men. Solitary reading is apt to give the headache. Besides, who knows that you *do* read? There are ten thousand institutions similar to the Royal Institution which have sprung up from it. There is the London Institution, the Southwark Institution, the Russell Square Rooms Institution, &c.—*College quasi Conlege*, a place where people read together. Wordsworth, the great poet, is coming to town; he is to have

apartments in the Mansion House. He says he does not see much difficulty in writing like Shakspeare, if he had a mind to try it. It is clear that nothing is wanting but the mind. Even Coleridge was a little checked at this hardihood of assertion. Dyer came to me the other evening at 11 o'clock, when there was a large room full of company, which I usually get together on a Wednesday evening, (all great men have public days,) to propose to me to have my face done by a Miss Beetham, (or Betham,) a miniature painter, some relation to Mrs Beetham the Profilist or Pattern Mangle woman opposite St Dunstan's, to put before my book of Extracts. I declined it.

Well, my dear Manning, talking cannot be infinite. I have said all I have to say; the rest is but remembrances of you, which we shall bear in our heads while we have heads. Here is a packet of trifles nothing worth; but it is a trifling part of the world where I live: emptiness abounds. But in fulness of affection, we remain yours, C. L.

CLI. TO MRS HAZLITT

Saturday, Dec. 10th, 1808.

There came this morning a printed Prospectus from "S. T. Coleridge, Grasmere," of a Weekly Paper, to be called *The Friend*; a flaming Prospectus. I have no time to give the heads of it. To commence the first Saturday in January. There came also notice of a turkey from Mr Clarkson, which I am more sanguine in expecting the accomplishment of than I am of Coleridge's prophecy.

C. LAMB.

Mrs Hazlitt, Winterslow,
near Sarum, Wilts.

CLII. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

March 11, 1808.

Dear Godwin,—The giant's vomit was perfectly nauseous, and I am glad you pointed it out. I have removed the objection. To the other passages I can find no other objection but what you may bring to numberless passages besides, such as of Scylla snatching up the six men, etc., that is to say, they are lively images of *shocking* things. If you want a book, which is not occasionally to *shock*, you should not have thought of a tale which was so full of anthropophagi and wonders. I cannot alter these things without enervating the Book, and I will not alter them if the penalty should be that you and all the London booksellers should refuse it. But speaking as author to author, I must say that I think *the terrible* in those two passages seems to me so much to preponderate over the nauseous, as to make them rather fine than disgusting. Who is to read them, I don't know: who is it that reads Tales of Terror and Mysteries of Udolpho? Such things sell. I only say that I will not consent to alter such passages, which I know to be some of the best in the book. As an author I say to you, an author, Touch not my work. As to a bookseller I say, Take the work such as it is, or refuse it. You are as free to refuse it as when we first talked of it. As to a friend I say, Don't plague yourself and me with nonsensical objections. I assure you I will not alter one more word.

CLIII. TO GEORGE DYER

From my desk in Leadenhall Street.
Dec. 5, 1808.

Dear Dyer,—Coleridge is not so bad as your fears have represented him; it is true that he is Bury'd, although he is not dead: to understand this quibble, you must know that he is at Bury St Edmund's, relaxing, after the fatigues of lecturing and Lon-

donizing. The little Rickmaness, whom you enquire after so kindly, thrives and grows apace; she is already a prattler, and 'tis thought that on some future day she may be a speaker! We hold our weekly meetings still at No. 16, where although, we are not so high as the top of Malvern, we are involved in almost as much mist. Miss B.'s merit, "in every point of view," I am not disposed to question, although I have not been indulged with any view of that lady, back, side, or front—fie! Dyer, to praise a female in such common market phrases,—you, who are held so courtly and so attentive. My book is not yet out, that is, not my "Extracts," my "Ulysses" is, and waits your acceptance. When you shall come to town, I hope to present you both together, never thinking of buying the "Extracts"—half-a-guinea books were never calculated for my friends. More poets have started up since your departure; William Hazlitt, your friend and mine, is putting to press a collection of verses, chiefly amatory, some of them pretty enough. How these painters encroach on our province! There's Hopner, Shee, Westall, and I dont know who besides, and Tresham. It seems, on confession, that they are not at the top of their own art, when they seek to eke out their fame with the assistance of another's; no large tea-dealer sells cheeses, no great silversmith deals in razor-straps: it is only your petty dealers who mix commodities. If Nero had been a great emperor he would never have played the violoncello! Who ever caught you, Dyer, designing a landscape, or taking a likeness? I have no more to add, who am the friend of virtue, poetry, and painting, therefore, in an especial manner,

Unalterably thine,

C. Lamb.

To G. Dyer, Esq.,
Jas. Martin's, M.P., Overbury, Worcestershire.

CLIV. MISS LAMB TO MRS CLARKSON

Saturday Morning (Dec. 10, 1808).
No. 16 Mitre Court Buildings.
Inner Temple.

My dear Mrs Clarkson,—I feel myself greatly indebted to Mr Clarkson for his care about our direction, since it has procured us the pleasure of a line from you. Why are we all, my dear friend, so unwilling to sit down and write a letter, when we all so well know the great satisfaction it is to hear of the welfare of an absent friend? I began to think that you and all I connect in my mind with you, were gone from us for ever—Coleridge in a manner gave us up when he was in town, and we have now lost all trace of him. At the time he was in town I received two letters from Miss Wordsworth, which I never answered, because I would not complain to her of our old friend. As this has never been explained to her, it must seem very strange, more particularly so, as Miss Hutchinson and Mrs Wordsworth were in an ill state of health at the time.

Will you some day soon write a few words just to tell me how they all are and all you know concerning them?

Do not imagine that I am now *complaining* to you of Coleridge. Perhaps we are both in fault. We expect *too much*, and he gives *too little*.

We ought many years ago to have understood each other better. Nor is it quite all over with us yet, for he will some day or other come in with the same old face, and receive (after a few spiteful words from me) the same warm welcome as ever. But we could not submit to sit as hearers at his lectures, and not be permitted to see our old friend, when *school-hours* were over. I beg that you will not let what I have said give you a moment's thought, nor pray do not mention it to the Wordsworths, nor to Coleridge, for I know he thinks I am apt to speak unkindly of him. I am

not good tempered, and I have two or three times given him proofs that I am not. You say you are all in your "better way," which is a very cheerful hearing, for I trust you mean to include that your health is *bettering* too.

I look forward with great pleasure to the near approach of Christmas and Mr Clarkson. And now the turkey you are so kind as to promise us comes into my head and tells me it is so very near that if writing before then should happen to be the least irksome to you, I will be content to wait for intelligence of our old friends till I have the pleasure of seeing Mr Clarkson in town. I ought to say this because I know at times how dreadfully irksome writing a letter is to me, even when I have no reason in the world to give, why it is so, and I remember I have heard you express something of the same kind of feelings.

I try to remember something to enquire after at Bury—The lady we visited, the cherry tree Tom and I robbed, Tom my partner in the robbery (Mr Thomas C—— I suppose now) and your Cook maid that was so kind to me are all at present I can recollect. Of all the places I ever saw Bury has made the liveliest impression on my memory. I have a very indistinct recollection of the Lakes.

Charles joins with me in affectionate remembrances to you all, and he is more warm in his expressions & gratitude for the Turkey, because he is fonder of good eating than I am, though I am not amiss in that way.

God bless you, my kind friends.

I remain yours affectionately,

M. Lamb.

Excuse this slovenly letter; if I were to write it over again, I should abridge it one half.

We have this moment receiv'd a very chearful letter of Mr Coleridge, who is now at Grasmere. It

contains a prospectus for a new weekly publication to be called *the friend*. He says they are well there, and in good spirits, & that he has not been so well for a long time.

CLV. POSTCRIPT BY C. LAMB

The Prospectus is of a weekly paper of a miscellaneous nature to be call'd *The Friend* and to come out the first number the first Saturday in January. Those who remember *the Watchman* will not be very sanguine in expecting a regular fulfilment of this Prophecy. But C. writes in delightful spirits, and if ever, he may *now* do this thing. I suppose he will send you a Prospectus.

I had some thought of inclosing mine. But I want to show it about. My kindest remembrances to Mr C. and thanks for the turkey.

C. LAMB.

CLVI. TO ROBERT LLOYD

Saty. 25 feb. 1809.

Dear Robert,—A great gap has been filled up since our intercourse was broken off. We shall at least have some things to talk over, when we meet. That you should never have been in London since I saw you last is a fact which I cannot account for on the principles of my own mental formation. You are worthy to be mentioned with Claudian's old Mare of Verona. I forbear to ask you any questions concerning your family, *who* are dead, and *who* married; I will not anticipate our meeting. I have been in total darkness respecting you all these years. I am just up; I have heard, without being able to confirm the fact, that Drury Lane Theatre is burnt to the ground. Of Walton's Angler a new edition is just published with the original plates revived. I think of buying it. The old editions are two guineas, and two guineas and

Inner Temple Lane,
from a print in the British Museum.

a half. I have not forgotten our ride from Saffron Waldon, and the madness of young parson Thomson of Cambridge that I took your brother to see. He is gone as a missionary to the East.

I live at present at Number 16 Mitre Court Buildings, Inner Temple. I shall move at ladyday, or a little later: if you dont find me in M.C.B. I shall be at No. *2 or 4* Inner Temple Lane.—At either of which places I shall be happy to shake my old friend Robert by the hand.

C. L.

CLVII. TO THOMAS MANNING

Southampton Buildings,
28th March, 1809.

Dear Manning,—I sent you a long letter by the ships which sailed the beginning of last month, accompanied with books, &c. Since I last wrote Holcroft is dead. He died on Thursday last. So there is one of your friends whom you will never see again! Perhaps the next fleet may bring you a letter from Martin Burney, to say that he writes by desire of Miss Lamb, who is not well enough to write herself, to inform you that her brother died on Thursday last, 14th June, &c. But I hope *not*. I should be sorry to give occasion to open a correspondence between Martin and you. This letter must be short, for I have driven it off to the very moment of doing up the packets; and besides, that which I refer to above is a very long one; and if you have received my books, you will have enough to do to read them. While I think on it, let me tell you, we are moved. Don't come any more to Mitre-Court Buildings. We are at 34, Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, and shall be here till about the end of May; then we remove to No. 4, Inner Temple Lane, where I mean to live and die; for I have such horror of moving, that I would not take a benefice from the King if

I was not indulged with non-residence. What a dislocation of comfort is comprised in that word "moving"! Such a heap of little nasty things, after you think all is got into the cart: old dredging-boxes, worn-out brushes, gallipots, vials, things that it is impossible the most necessitous person can ever want, but which the women, who preside on these occasions, will not leave behind if it was to save your soul. They'd keep the cart ten minutes to stow in dirty pipes and broken matches, to show their economy. Then you can find nothing you want for many days after you get into your new lodgings. You must comb your hair with your fingers, wash your hands without soap, go about in dirty gaiters. Were I Diogenes, I would not move out of a kilderkin into a hogshead, though the first had had nothing but small beer in it, and the second reeked claret. Our place of final destination,—I don't mean the grave, but No. 4, Inner Temple Lane,—looks out upon a gloomy churchyard-like court, called Hare Court, with three trees and a pump in it. Do you know it? I was born near it, and used to drink at that pump when I was a Rechabite of six years old. If you see newspapers you will read about Mrs Clarke. The sensation in London about this nonsensical business is marvellous. I remember nothing in my life like it: thousands of ballads, caricatures, lives of Mrs Clarke in every blind alley. Yet in the midst of this stir, a sublime abstracted dancing-master, who attends a family we know at Kensington, being asked a question about the progress of the examinations in the House, inquired who Mrs Clarke was? He had heard nothing of it. He had evaded this omnipresence by utter insignificancy! The Duke should make that man his confidential valet. I proposed locking him up, barring him the use of his fiddle and red pumps, until he had minutely perused and committed to memory the whole body of

the examinations, which employed the House of Commons a fortnight, to teach him to be more attentive to what concerns the public. I think I told you of Godwin's little book, and of Coleridge's prospectus, in my last; if I did not, remind me of it, and I will send you them, or an account of them, next fleet. I have no conveniency of doing it by this. Mrs —— grows every day in disfavour with me. I will be buried with this inscription over me:—"Here lies C. L., the woman-hater:" I mean that hated one woman: for the rest, God bless them! How do you like the Mandarinesses? Are you on some little footing with any of them? This is Wednesday, On Wednesdays is my levee. The Captain, Martin, Phillips, (not the Sheriff,) Rickman, and some more, are constant attendants, besides stray visitors. We play at whist, eat cold meat and hot potatoes, and any gentleman that chooses smokes. Why do you never drop in? You'll come some day, won't you?

C. Lamb, &c.

CLVIII. TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

June 7th, 1809.

Dear Coleridge,—I congratulate you on the appearance of the *Friend*. Your first Number promises well, and I have no doubt the succeeding Numbers will fulfil the promise. I had a kind letter from you some time since, which I have left unanswered. I am also obliged to you, I believe, for a review in the Annual, am I not? The *Monthly Review* sneers at me, and asks "if *Comus* is not *good enough* for Mr Lamb?" because I have said no good serious dramas have been written since the death of Charles the First, except *Samson Agonistes*. So because they do not know, or won't remember, that *Comus* was written long before, I am to be set down as an undervaluer of Milton! O Coleridge, do kill those reviews,

or they will kill us; kill all we like. Be a friend to all else, but their foe. I have been turned out of my chambers in the Temple by a landlord who wanted them for himself, but I have got other at No. 4, Inner Temple Lane, far more commodious and roomy. I have two rooms on the third floor and five rooms above, with an inner staircase to myself, and all new painted, &c., and all for £30 a year! I came into them on Saturday week; and on Monday following Mary was taken ill with the fatigue of moving; and affected, I believe, by the novelty of the home she could not sleep, and I am left alone with a maid quite a stranger to me, and she a month or two's sad distraction to go through. What sad large pieces it cuts out of life!—out of *her* life, who is getting rather old; and we may not have many years to live together. I am weaker, and bear it worse than I ever did. But I hope we shall be comfortable by-and-by. The rooms are delicious, and the best look backwards into Hare Court, where there is a pump always going. Just now it is dry. Hare Court trees come in at the window, so that 'tis like living in a garden. I try to persuade myself it is much pleasanter than Mitre Court; but, alas! the household gods are slow to come in a new mansion. They are in their infancy to me; I do not feel them yet; no hearth has blazed to them yet. How I hate and dread new places!

I was very glad to see Wordsworth's book advertised: I am to have it to-morrow lent me, and if Wordsworth don't send me an order for one upon Longman, I will buy it. It is greatly extolled and liked by all who have seen it. Let me hear from some of you, for I am desolate. I shall have to send you, in a week or two, two volumes of Juvenile Poetry, done by Mary and me within the last six months, and that tale in prose which Wordsworth so much liked, which was published at Christmas, with nine others, by us, and has reached a second

edition. There's for you! We have almost worked ourselves out of child's work, and I don't know what to do. Sometimes I think of a drama, but I have no head for play-making; I can do the dialogue, and that's all. I am quite aground for a plan; but I must do something for money. Not that I have immediate wants, but I have prospective ones. O money, money, how blindly thou hast been worshipped, and how stupidly abused! Thou art health and liberty and strength; and he that has thee may rattle his pockets at the Devil.

Nevertheless, do not understand by this that I have not quite enough for my occasions for a year or two to come. While I think on it, Coleridge, I fetch'd away my books which you had at the *Courier* Office, and found all but a third volume of the old plays, containing the *White Devil*, Green's *Tu Quoque*, and the *Honest Whore*, perhaps the most valuable volume of them all—*that* I could not find. Pray, if you can, remember what you did with it, or where you took it out with you a walking perhaps; send me word, for, to use the old plea, it spoils a set. I found two other volumes (you had three), the *Arcadia*, and *Daniel*, enriched with manuscript notes. I wish every book I have were so noted. They have thoroughly converted me to relish *Daniel*, or to say I relish him, for, after all, I believe I did relish him. You well call him sober-minded. Your notes are excellent. Perhaps you've forgot them. I have read a review in the *Quarterly*, by Southey, on the Missionaries, which is most masterly. I only grudge its being there. It is quite beautiful. Do remember my Dodsley; and, pray, do write, or let some of you write. Clarkson tells me you are in a smoky house. Have you cured it? It is hard to cure any thing of smoking. Our little poems are but humble, but they have no name. You must read them, remembering they were task work; and perhaps you

will admire the number of subjects, all of children, picked out by an old Bachelor and an old Maid. Many parents would not have found so many. Have you read *Cælebs?* It has reached eight editions in so many weeks, yet literally it is one of the very poorest sort of common novels, with the draw-back of dull religion in it. Had the religion been high and flavoured, it would have been something. I borrowed this *Cælebs in Search of a Wife*, of a very careful, neat lady, and returned it with this stuff written in the beginning :—

> "If ever I marry a wife
> I'll marry a landlord's daughter,
> For then I may sit in the bar,
> And drink cold brandy and water."

I don't expect you can find time from your *Friend* to write to me much; but write something, for there has been a long silence. You know Holcroft is dead. Godwin is well. He has written a very pretty, absurd book about sepulchres. He was affronted because I told him it was better than Hervey, but not so good as Sir T. Browne. This letter is all about books; but my head aches, and I hardly know what I write, but I could not let the *Friend* pass without a congratulatory epistle. I won't criticise till it comes to a volume. Tell me how I shall send my packet to you?—by what conveyance?—by Longman, Shortman, or how? Give my kindest remembrances to Wordsworth. Tell him he must give me a book. My kind love to Mrs W. and to Dorothy separately and conjointly. I wish you could all come and see me in my new rooms. God bless you all. C. L.

CLIX. TO THE SAME

Monday, Oct. 30th, 1809.

Dear Coleridge,—I have but this moment received your letter, dated the 9th instant, having just come off a journey from Wiltshire, where I have been with

Hare Court in 1857
From a Print in the British Museum

Mary on a visit to Hazlitt. The journey has been of infinite service to her. We have had nothing but sunshiny days, and daily walks from eight to twenty miles a-day; have seen Wilton, Salisbury, Stonehenge, &c. Her illness lasted but six weeks; it left her weak, but the country has made us whole. We came back to our Hogarth Room. I have made several acquisitions since you saw them,—and found Nos. 8, 9, 10 of the *Friend*. The account of Luther in the Warteburg is as fine as any thing I ever read. God forbid that a man who has such things to say should be silenced for want of £100. This Custom-and-Duty age would have made the Preacher on the Mount take out a licence, and St Paul's Epistles would not have been missible without a stamp. O that you may find means to go on! But alas! where is Sir G. Beaumont?—Sotheby? What is become of the rich Auditors in Albemarle Street? Your letter has saddened me.

I am so tired with my journey, being up all night, that I have neither things nor words in my power. I believe I expressed my admiration of the pamphlet. Its power over me was like that which Milton's pamphlets must have had on his contemporaries, who were tuned to them. What a piece of prose! Do you hear if it is read at all? I am out of the world of readers. I hate all that do read, for they read nothing but reviews and new books. I gather myself up unto the old things.

I have put up shelves. You never saw a book-case in more true harmony with the contents than what I've nailed up in a room, which, though new, has more aptitudes for growing old than you shall often see—as one sometimes gets a friend in the middle of life, who becomes an old friend in a short time. My rooms are luxurious; one is for prints and one for books; a Summer and a Winter parlour. When shall I ever see you in them? C. L.

BOOK III.—1810-1820

THE PRE-ELIAN DECADE

CHAPTER I

CASUAL ADVENTURES IN HUMOUR AND CRITICISM FROM THE "DEFLECTOR" TO THE "QUARTERLY"

JANUARY 1810—DECEMBER 1815

CLX. TO ROBERT LLOYD

[January 1, 1810.]

Dear Robert,—In great haste I write. The Turkey is down at the fire, and some pleasant friends are come in to partake of it. The Sender's Health shall not be forgot—What you tell me of your Father's perseverance in his honorable task gives me great pleasure. Seven Books are a serious earnest of the whole which I hope to see finished.—

We had a delightful month in Wiltshire, four weeks of uniform fine weather, the only fine days which had been all the Summer, saw Salisbury Cathedral, Stonehenge, Wilton &c.—Mary is in excellent health, and sends her Love. Accept of mine with my kind respects to Mrs Ll.—and to your father and mother.

Coleridge's friend is occasionally sublime—What do you think of that Description of Luther in his Study in one of the earlier numbers? The worst is, he is

always promising something which never comes, it is now 18th Number, and continues introductory, the 17th. (that stupid long letter) was nothing better than a Prospectus and ought to have preceded the 1st Number. But I rejoice that it lives.

When you come to London, you will find us at No. 4 Inner Temple Lane, with a few old Books, a few old Hogarths round the room, and the Household Gods at last established. The feeling of Home, which has been slow to come, has come at last. May I never move again, but may my next Lodging be my Coffin.

Yours truly,

C. Lamb.

CLXI. TO THOMAS MANNING

Jan. 2nd, 1810.

Dear Manning,—When I last wrote to you I was in lodgings. I am now in chambers, No. 4, Inner Temple Lane, where I should be happy to see you any evening. Bring any of your friends, the Mandarins, with you. I have two sitting-rooms: I call them so *par excellence*, for you may stand, or loll, or lean, or try any posture in them, but they are best for sitting; not squatting down Japanese fashion, but the more decorous use of the——which European usage has consecrated. I have two of these rooms on the third floor, and five sleeping, cooking, &c. rooms, on the fourth floor. In my best room is a choice collection of the works of Hogarth, an English painter of some humour. In my next best are shelves containing a small but well-chosen library. My best room commands a court, in which there are trees and a pump, the water of which is excellent cold, with brandy, and not very insipid without. Here I hope to set up my rest, and not

quit till Mr Powell, the undertaker, gives me notice that I may have possession of my last lodging. He lets lodgings for single gentlemen. I sent you a parcel of books by my last, to give you some idea of the state of European literature. There comes with this two volumes, done up as letters, of minor poetry, a sequel to "Mrs Leicester"; the best you may suppose mine; the next best are my coadjutor's. You may amuse yourself in guessing them out; but I must tell you mine are but one-third in quantity of the whole. So much for a very delicate subject. It is hard to speak of one's self, &c. Holcroft had finished his life when I wrote to you, and Hazlitt has since finished his life; I do not mean his own life, but he has finished a life of Holcroft, which is going to press. Tuthill is Dr Tuthill. I continue Mr Lamb. I have published a little book for children on titles of honour; and to give them some idea of the difference of rank and gradual rising, I have made a little scale, supposing myself to receive the following various accessions of dignity from the king, who is the fountain of honour—As at first, 1, Mr C. Lamb; 2, C. Lamb, Esq.; 3, Sir C. Lamb, Bart.; 4, Baron Lamb, of Stamford; 5, Viscount Lamb; 6, Earl Lamb; 7, Marquis Lamb; 8, Duke Lamb. It would look like quibbling to carry it on further, and especially as it is not necessary for children to go beyond the ordinary titles of sub-regal dignity in our own country; otherwise I have sometimes in my dreams imagined myself still advancing, as 9th, King Lamb; 10th, Emperor Lamb; 11th, Pope Innocent; higher than which is nothing upon earth. Puns I have not made many, (nor punch much,) since the date of my last; one I cannot help relating. A constable in Salisbury Cathedral was telling me that eight people dined at the top of the spire of the cathedral; upon which I remarked, that they must be very sharp set. But

in general I cultivate the reasoning part of my mind more than the imaginative. I am stuffed out so with eating turkey for dinner, and another turkey for supper yesterday, (Turkey in Europe and Turkey in Asia,) that I can't jog on. It is New Year here; that is, it was New Year half a-year back, when I was writing this. Nothing puzzles me more than time and space; and yet nothing puzzles me less, for I never think about them. The Persian ambassador is the principal thing talked of now. I sent some people to see him worship the sun on Primrose Hill, at half-past six in the morning, 28th November; but he did not come, which makes me think the old fire-worshippers are a sect almost extinct in Persia. The Persian ambassador's name is Shaw Ali Mirza. The common people call him Shaw Nonsense. While I think of it, I have put three letters, besides my own three, into the India post for you, from your brother, sister, and some gentleman whose name I forget. Will they, have they, did they come safe? The distance you are at, cuts up tenses by the root. I think you said you did not know Kate * * * * * * * * *. I express her by nine stars, though she is but one. You must have seen her at her father's. Try and remember her. Coleridge is bringing out a paper in weekly Numbers, called the *Friend*, which I would send if I could; but the difficulty I had in getting the packets of books out to you before, deters me; and you'll want some thing new to read when you come home. It is chiefly intended to puff off Wordsworth's poetry; but there are some noble things in it by the by. Except Kate, I have had no vision of excellence this year, and she passed by like the Queen on her coronation day; you don't know whether you saw her or not. Kate is fifteen: I go about moping, and sing the old pathetic ballad I used to like in my youth—

"She's sweet fifteen,
I'm *one year more.*"

Mrs Bland sang it in boy's clothes the first time I heard it. I sometimes think the lower notes in my voice are like Mrs Bland's. That glorious singer, Braham, one of my lights, is fled. He was for a season. He was a rare composition of the Jew, the gentleman, and the angel; yet all these elements mixed up so kindly in him, that you could not tell which preponderated; but he is gone, and one Phillips is engaged instead. Kate is vanished, but Miss B—— is always to be met with!

"Queens drop away, while blue-legg'd Maukin thrives;
And courtly Mildred dies while country Madge survives."

That is not my poetry, but Quarles's; but haven't you observed that the rarest things are the least obvious? Don't show any body the names in this letter. I write confidentially, and wish this letter to be considered as *private.* Hazlitt has written a *grammar* for Godwin. Godwin sells it bound up with a treatise of his own on language; but the *grey mare is the better horse.* I don't allude to Mrs [Godwin], but to the word *grammar*, which comes near to *grey mare*, if you observe, in sound. That figure is called paronomasia in Greek. I am sometimes happy in it. An old woman begged of me for charity. "Ah! sir," said she, "I have seen better days." "So have I, good woman," I replied; but I meant, literally, days not so rainy and overcast as that on which she begged: she meant more prosperous days. Mr Dawe is made associate of the Royal Academy. By what law of association I can't guess, Mrs Holcroft, Miss Holcroft, Mr and Mrs Godwin, Mr and Mrs Hazlitt, Mrs Martin and Louisa, Mrs Lum, Capt. Burney, Mrs Burney, Martin Burney, Mr Rickman, Mrs Rickman, Dr Stoddart, William Dollin, Mr

Thompson, Mr and Mrs Norris, Mr Fenwick, Mrs Fenwick, Miss Fenwick, a man that saw you at our house one day, and a lady that heard me speak of you; Mrs Buffam that heard Hazlitt mention you, Dr Tuthill, Mrs Tuthill, Colonel Harwood, Mrs Harwood, Mr Collier, Mrs Collier, Mr Sutton, Nurse, Mr Fell, Mrs Fell, Mr Marshall, are very well, and occasionally inquire after you.

I remain yours ever,

CH. LAMB.

CLXII. TO JOHN MATHEW GUTCH

[April 9, 1810.]

Dear Gutch,—I did not see your brother, who brought me Wither; but he understood, he said, you were daily expecting to come to town: this has prevented my writing. The books have pleased me excessively: I should think you could not have made a better selection. I never saw *Philarete* before—judge of my pleasure. I could not forbear scribbling certain critiques in pencil on the blank leaves. Shall I send them, or may I expect to see you in town? Some of them are remarks on the character of Wither and of his writings. Do you mean to have any thing of that kind? What I have said on *Philarete* is poor, but I think some of the rest not so bad: perhaps I have exceeded my commission in scrawling over the copies; but my delight therein must excuse me, and pencil-marks will rub out. Where is the Life? Write, for I am quite in the dark.

Yours, with many thanks,

C. LAMB.

Perhaps I could digest the few critiques prefixed to the Satires, Shepherds Hunting, &c., into a short

abstract of Wither's character and works, at the end of his Life. But, may be, you don't want any thing, and have said all you wish in the Life.

CLXIII. TO BASIL MONTAGU

Winterstow, near Sarum,
July 12th, 1810.

Dear Montague,—I have turned and twisted the MSS. in my head, and can make nothing of them. I knew when I took them that I could not, but I do not like to do an act of ungracious necessity at once; so I am ever committing myself by half engagements, and total failures. I cannot make any body understand why I can't do such things; it is a defect in my occiput. I cannot put other people's thoughts together; I forget every paragraph as fast as I read it; and my head has received such a shock by an all-night journey on the top of the coach, that I shall have enough to do to nurse it into its natural pace before I go home. I must devote myself to imbecility; I must be gloriously useless while I stay here. How is Mrs M.? will she pardon my inefficiency? The city of Salisbury is full of weeping and wailing. The bank has stopped payment; and every body in the town kept money at it, or has got some of its notes. Some have lost all they had in the world. It is the next thing to seeing a city with the plague within its walls. The Wilton people are all undone; all the manufacturers there kept cash at the Salisbury bank; and I do suppose it to be the unhappiest county in England this, where I am making holiday. We propose setting out for Oxford Tuesday fortnight, and coming thereby home. But no more night travelling. My head is sore (understand it of the inside) with that deduction from my natural rest which I suffered

coming down. Neither Mary nor I can spare a morsel of our rest: it is incumbent on us to be misers of it. Travelling is not good for us, we travel so seldom. If the sun be hell, it is not for the fire, but for the sempiternal motion of that miserable body of light. How much more dignified leisure hath a mussel glued to his unpassable rocky limit, two inch square! He hears the tide roll over him, backwards and forwards twice a-day, (as the Salisbury long coach goes and returns in eight-and-forty hours,) but knows better than to take an outside night-place a top on't. He is the owl of the sea—Minerva's fish—the fish of wisdom.

Our kindest remembrances to Mrs M.

Yours truly,

C. Lamb.

CLXIV. TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

[August 9th, 1810.]

Dear H.,—Epistemon is not well. Our pleasant excursion has ended sadly for one of us. You will guess I mean my sister. She got home very well, (I was very ill on the journey,) and continued so till Monday night, when her complaint came on, and she is now absent from home.

I am glad to hear you are all well. I think I shall be mad if I take any more journeys, with two experiences against it. I found all well here. Kind remembrances to Sarah,—have just got her letter.

H. Robinson has been to Blenheim. He says you will be sorry to hear that we should not have asked for the Titian Gallery there. One of his friends knew of it, and asked to see it. It is never shown but to those who inquire for it.

The pictures are all Titians, Jupiter and Ledas, Mars and Venuses, &c., all naked pictures, which may be a reason they don't show them to females.

But he says they are very fine; and perhaps they are shown separately to put another fee into the shower's pocket. Well, I shall never see it.

I have lost all wish for sights. God bless you. I shall be glad to see you in London.

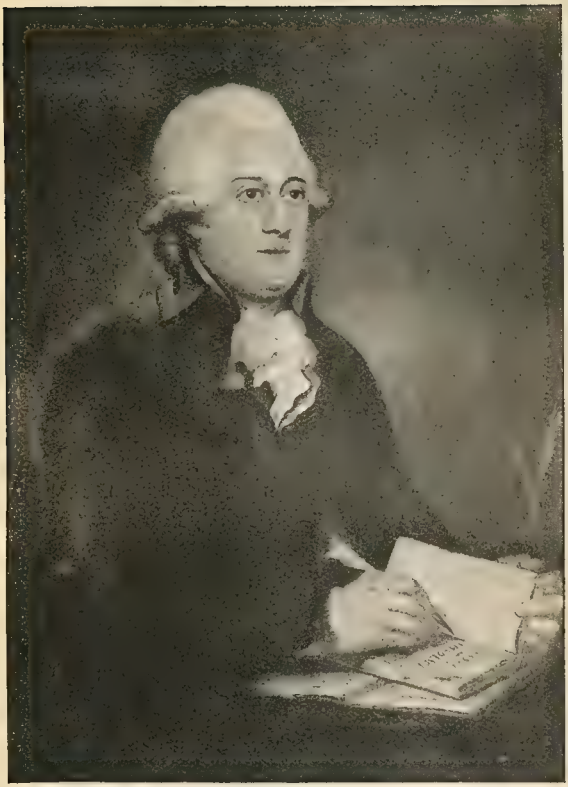
Yours truly,

C. Lamb.

Mr Hazlitt, Winterslow, near Salisbury.

CLXV. TO MR AND MRS CLARKSON

Dear Mr and Mrs Clarkson,—You will wish to know how we performed our journey. My sister was tolerably quiet until we got to Chelmsford, when she began to be very bad indeed, as your friends William Knight and his family can tell you when you see them. What I should have done without their kindness, I dont know, but among other acts of great attention, they provided me with a waistcoat to confine her arms, by the help of which we went through the rest of our journey. But sadly tired and considerably depressed she was before we arrived at Hoxton. We got their about half past eight, and now 'tis all over. I have great satisfaction that she is among people who have been used to her. In all probability a few months or even weeks will restore her (her last illness confined her ten weeks) but if she does recover I shall be very careful how I take her so far from home again. I am so fatigued, for she talked in the most wretched, desponding way conceivable, particularly the last three stages, she talked all the way—so that you wont expect me to say much, or even to express myself as I should do in thanks for your kindnesses. My sister will acknowledge them when she can.



Thomas Clarkson, from the painting by C. F. De Breda of Stockholm, in the National Portrait Gallery.

I shall not have heard how she is to-day until too late for the Post, but if any great change takes place for better or worse, I shall certainly let you know.

She tells me something about having given away one of my coats to your servant. It is a new one, and perhaps may be of small use to him. If you can get it me again, I shall be very willing to give him a compensation. I shall also be much obliged by your sending in a parcel all the manuscripts books &c. she left behind. I want in particular the Dramatic Extracts, as my purpose is to make use of the remainder of my holydays in completing them at the British Museum, which will be employment and money in the end.

I am exceedingly harassed with the journey, but that will go off in a day or two, and I will get to work. I know you will grieve for us, but I hope my sister's illness is not worse than many she has got through before.

Only I am afraid the fatigue of the journey may affect her general health. You shall have notice how she goes on. In the meantime, accept kindest thanks.

(Signature cut off.)

CLXVI. TO MRS CLARKSON

Monday, 18 Sep. 1810.

Dear Mrs Clarkson,—I did not write till I could have the satisfaction of sending you word that my Sister was better. She is in fact quite restored, and will be with me in little more than a week.—I received Mr C.'s Letter and transmitted it to Hazlitt—My kind Love to him, and to Miss W. Tell her I hope that while she stays in London, she will make our chambers her Lodging. If she can put up with half a Bed, I am sure she will be a most welcome visitor to Mary and me.—The Montagu's set out for the North this day.

What fine things they are going to see, for the first time! which I have seen, but in all human probability shall never see again!—the mountains often come back to me in my dreams, or rather I miss them at those times, for I have been repeatedly haunted with the *same dream*, which is that I am in Cumberland, that I have been there some weeks, and am at the end of my Holidays, but in all that time I have not seen Skiddaw &c.—the Hills are all vanished, and I shall go home without seeing them. The trouble of this dream denotes the weight they must have had on my mind, and while I was there, which was almost oppressive, and perhaps is caused by the great difficulty I have in recalling any thing like a distinct form of any one of those great masses to my memory. Bless me I have scarce left room to say Good-B'ye.—

C. LAMB.

CLXVII. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Friday, 19th Oct, 1810. E. I. Ho.

Dear W.,—Mary has been very ill, which you have heard, I suppose, from the Montagues. She is very weak and low-spirited now. I was much pleased with your continuation of the Essay on Epitaphs. It is the only sensible thing which has been written on that subject, and it goes to the bottom. In particular I was pleased with your translation of that turgid epitaph into the plain feeling under it. It is perfectly a test. But what is the reason we have no good epitaphs after all?

A very striking instance of your position might be found in the churchyard of Ditton-upon-Thames, if you know such a place. Ditton-upon-Thames has been blessed by the residence of a poet, who for love or money, I do not well know which, has dignified every gravestone, for the last few years, with bran-

new verses, all different, and all ingenious, with the author's name at the bottom of each. This sweet Swan of Thames has so artfully diversified his strains and his rhymes, that the same thought never occurs twice; more justly, perhaps, as no thought ever occurs at all, there was a physical impossibility that the same thought should recur. It is long since I saw and read these inscriptions, but I remember the impression was of a smug usher at his desk in the intervals of instruction, levelling his pen. Of death, as it consists of dust and worms, and mourners and uncertainty, he had never thought; but the word "death" he had often seen separate and conjunct with other words, till he had learned to speak of all its attributes as glibly as Unitarian Belsham will discuss you the attributes of the word "God" in a pulpit; and will talk of infinity with a tongue that dangles from a skull that never reached in thought and thorough imagination two inches, or further than from his hand to his mouth, or from the vestry to the sounding-board of the pulpit.

But the epitaphs were trim, and sprag, and patent, and pleased the survivors of Thames-Ditton above the old mumpsimus of "Afflictions Sore." . . . To do justice though, it must be owned that even the excellent feeling which dictated this dirge when new must have suffered something in passing through so many thousand applications, many of them no doubt quite misplaced, as I have seen in Islington churchyard (I think) an Epitaph to an infant who died "*Ætatis* four months," with this seasonable inscription appended, "Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long in the land," &c. Sincerely wishing your children long life to honour, &c.,

I remain,

C. Lamb.

CLXVIII. TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

Nov. 23, 1810.

We are in a pickle. Mary, from her affectation of physiognomy, has hired a stupid big country wench, who looked honest, as she thought, and has been doing her work some days, but without eating—eats no butter, nor meat, but prefers cheese with her tea for breakfast; and now it comes out that she was ill when she came, with lifting her mother about (who is now with God) when she was dying, and with riding up from Norfolk, four days and nights in the waggon. She got advice yesterday, and took something which has made her bring up a quart of blood, and she now lies in her bed, a dead weight upon our humanity, incapable of getting up, refusing to go into an hospital, having nobody in town but a poor asthmatic uncle whose son lately married a drab who fills his house, and there is nowhere she can go, and she seems to have made up her mind to take her flight to heaven from our bed. Oh for the little wheelbarrow which trundled the hunchback from door to door to try the various charities of different professions of mankind! Here's her uncle just crawled up. He is far liker Death than she. Oh the Parish, the Parish, the hospital, the infirmary, the charnel-house! —these are places meet for such guests, not our quiet mansion, where nothing but affluent plenty and literary ease should abound.—Howard's House, Howard's House, or where the Paralytic descended through the sky-light (what a God's gift!) to get at our Saviour. In this perplexity such topics as Spanish papers and Monkhouses sink into comparative insignificance. What shall we do? If she died, it were something: gladly would I pay the coffin-maker, and the bell-man and searchers. C. L.

To Miss Wordsworth,
Grasmere, near Kendal, Westmoreland.

CLXIX. TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

Wednesday, 28th Nov. 1810.

Dear Hazlitt,—I sent you on Saturday a Cobbett, containing your reply to the *Edinburgh Review*, which I thought you would be glad to receive as an example of attention on the part of Mr Cobbett to insert it so speedily. Did you get it? We have received your pig, and return you thanks; it will be dressed in due form, with appropriate sauce, this day. Mary has been very ill indeed since you saw her; that is, as ill as she can be to remain at home. But she is a good deal better now, owing to a very careful regimen. She drinks nothing but water, and never goes out; she does not even go to the Captain's. Her indisposition has been ever since that night you left town; the night Miss W[ordsworth] came. Her coming, and that d——d Mrs Godwin coming and staying so late that night, so overset her that she lay broad awake all that night, and it was by a miracle that she escaped a very bad illness, which I thoroughly expected. I have made up my mind that she shall never have any one in the house again with her, and that no one shall sleep with her, not even for a night; for it is a very serious thing to be always living with a kind of fever upon her; and therefore I am sure you will take it in good part if I say that if Mrs Hazlitt comes to town at any time, however glad we shall be to see her in the day-time, I cannot ask her to spend a night under our roof. Some decision we must come to, for the harassing fever that we have both been in, owing to Miss Wordsworth's coming, is not to be borne; and I would rather be dead than so alive. However, at present, owing to a regimen and medicines which Tuthill has given her, who very kindly volunteer'd the care of her, she is a great deal quieter, though too much harassed by company, who cannot or will not see how late hours and society teaze her.

Poor Phillips had the cup dash'd out of his lips as it were. He had every prospect of the situation, when about ten days since one of the Council of the R—— Society started for the place himself, being a rich merchant who lately failed, and he will certainly be elected on Friday next. P. is very sore and miserable about it.

Coleridge is in town, or at least at Hammersmith. He is writing or going to write in the *Courier* against Cobbett, and in favour of paper money.

No news. Remember me kindly to Sarah. I write from the office.

Yours ever,

C. Lamb.

I just open'd it to say the pig, upon proof, hath turned out as good as I predicted. My fauces yet retain the sweet porcine odour. I find you have received the Cobbett. I think your paper complete.

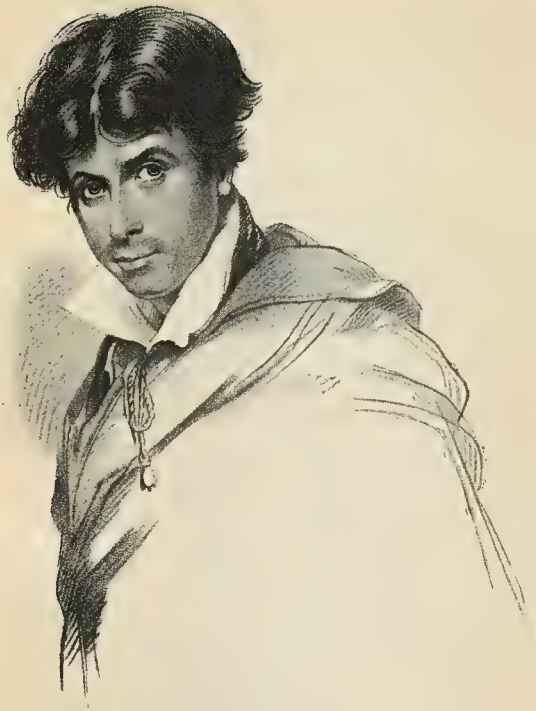
Mrs Reynolds, who is a sage woman, approves of the pig.

Mr Hazlitt,
Winterslow, near Salisbury, Wilts.

CLXX. TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

1810.

Dear R.,—My brother, whom you have met at my rooms (a plump, good-looking man of seven-and-forty) has written a book about humanity, which I transmit to you herewith. Wilson, the publisher, has put it into his head that you can get it reviewed for him. I daresay it is not in the scope of your Review; but if you could put it in any likely train, he would rejoice. For alas! our boasted humanity partakes of vanity. As it is, he teazes me to death with choosing to suppose that I could get it into all the Reviews at a moment's notice. *I!!* who have been set up as a mark for them



Leigh Hunt, from an engraving by H. Meyer, after a drawing by J. Hayter.

to throw at, and would willingly consign them all to Megæra's snaky locks.

But here's the book, and don't show it to Mrs Collier; for I remember she makes excellent *eel* soup, and the leading points of the book are directed against that very process.

Yours truly,
C. Lamb.

CLXXI. TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

2nd Oct. 1811.

Dear Hazlitt,—I cannot help accompanying my sister's congratulations to Sarah with some of my own to you on this happy occasion of a man child being born.

Delighted fancy already sees him some future rich alderman or opulent merchant, painting perhaps a little in his leisure hours, for amusement, like the late H. Bunbury, Esq.

Pray, are the Winterslow estates entailed? I am afraid lest the young dog when he grows up should cut down the woods, and leave no groves for widows to take their lonesome solace in. The Wem estate of course can only devolve on him in case of your brother's leaving no male issue.

Well, my blessing and heaven's be upon him, and make him like his father, with something a better temper, and a smoother head of hair; and then all the men and women must love him.

Martin and the card-boys join in congratulations. Love to Sarah. Sorry we are not within candle-shot.

C. Lamb.

If the widow be assistant on this notable occasion, give our due respects and kind remembrances to her.

Mr Hazlitt, Winterslow,
near Sarum, Wilts.

CLXXII. TO J. P. COLLIER

[1812 or 1813.]

Dear Sir,—Mrs Collier has been kind enough to say that you would endeavour to procure a reporter's situation for W. Hazlitt. I went to consult him upon it last night, and he acceded very eagerly to the proposal, and requests me to say how very much obliged he feels to your kindness, and how glad he should be for its success. He is, indeed, at his wits' end for a livelihood; and, I should think, especially qualified for such an employment, from his singular facility in retaining all conversations at which he has been ever present. I think you may recommend him with confidence: I am sure I shall *myself* be obliged to you for your exertions, having a great regard for him.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

(Sunday morning.)

CLXXIII. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

"Bis dat qui dat cito."

I hate the pedantry of expressing that in another language which we have sufficient terms for in our own. So in plain English I very much wish you to give your vote to-morrow at Clerkenwell, instead of Saturday. It would clear up the brows of my favourite candidate, and stagger the hands of the opposite party. It commences at nine. How easy, as you come from Kensington (*à propos*, how is your excellent family?) to turn down Bloomsbury, through Leather Lane (avoiding Lay Stall St. for the disagreeableness of the name). Why, it brings you in four minutes and a half to the spot renowned on northern milestones, "where Hicks' Hall formerly stood." There will be good cheer ready for every independent freeholder; where you see a green flag hang out go boldly in, call for ham, or beef, or what you please,

and a mug of Meux's Best. How much more gentlemen like to come in the front of the battle, openly avowing one's sentiments, than to lag in on the last day, when the adversary is dejected, spiritless, laid low. Have the first cut at them. By Saturday you'll cut into the mutton. I'd go cheerfully myself, but I am no freeholder (Fuimus Troes, fuit Ilium), but I sold it for £50. If they'd accept a copy-holder, we clerks are naturally *copy*-holders.

By the way, get Mrs Hume, or that agreeable Amelia or Caroline, to stick a bit of green in your hat. Nothing daunts the adversary more than to wear the colours of your party. Stick it in cockade-like. It has a martial, and by no means disagreeable effect.

Go, my dear freeholder, and if any chance calls you out of this transitory scene earlier than expected, the coroner shall sit lightly on your corpse. He shall not too anxiously enquire into the circumstances of blood found upon your razor. That might happen to any gentleman in shaving. Nor into your having been heard to express a contempt of life, or for scolding Louisa for what Julia did, and other trifling incoherencies.

Yours sincerely,

C. Lamb.

CLXXIV. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

20th Octob^r 1814.

Dear S.,—I have this day deposited with Mr G. Bedford the essay you suggested to me. I am afraid it is wretchedly inadequate. Who can cram into a strait coop of a review any serious idea of such a vast and magnificent poem as *Excursion*?

I am myself, too, peculiarly unfit from constitutional causes and want of time. However, it is gone.

I have 9 or 10 days of my holydays left, but the rains are come.

Kind remembrances to Mrs S. and sisters.

Yours truly,

C. L.

[*Endorsed*]
R. Southey, Esq.,
Keswick, Near Penrith, Cumberland.

CLXXV. TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

13th Aug., 1814.

Dear Resuscitate, — There comes to you by the vehicle from Lad Lane this day a volume of German; what it is I cannot justly say, the characters of those northern nations having been always singularly harsh and unpleasant to me. It is a contribution of Dr Southey's towards your wants, and you would have had it sooner but for an odd accident. I wrote for it three days ago, and the Doctor, as he thought, sent it me. A book of like exterior he did send, but being disclosed, how far unlike! It was the *Well-bred Scholar*,—a book with which it seems the Doctor laudably fills up those hours which he can steal from his medical avocations. Chesterfield, Blair, Beattie, portions from the *Life of Savage*, make up a prettyish system of morality and the belles-lettres, which Mr Mylius, a schoolmaster, has properly brought together, and calls the collection by the denomination above mentioned. The Doctor had no sooner discovered his error, than he dispatched man and horse to rectify the mistake, and with a pretty kind of ingenuous modesty in his note, seemeth to deny any knowledge of the *Well-bred Scholar*; false modesty surely, and a blush misplaced: for what more pleasing than the consideration of professional austerity thus relaxing, thus improving! But so, when a child, I remember blushing, being

caught on my knees to my Maker, or doing otherwise some pious and praiseworthy action: *now* I rather love such things to be seen. Henry Crabb Robinson is out upon his circuit, and his books are inaccessible without his leave and key. He is attending the Norfolk Circuit, — a short term, but to him, as to many young lawyers, a long vacation, sufficiently dreary. I thought I could do no better than transmit to him, not extracts, but your very letter itself, than which I think I never read any thing more moving, more pathetic, or more conducive to the purpose of persuasion. The Crab is a sour Crab if it does not sweeten him. I think it would draw another third volume of Dodsley out of me; but you say you don't want any English books. Perhaps, after all, that's as well; one's romantic credulity is for ever misleading one into misplaced acts of foolery. Crab might have answered by this time: his juices take a long time supplying, but they'll run at last—I know they will—pure golden pippin. His address is as T. Robinson's, Bury, or if on circuit to be forwarded immediately—such my peremptory superscription. A fearful rumour has since reached me that the Crab is on the eve of setting out for France. If he is in England your letter will reach him, and I flatter myself a touch of the persuasive of my own, which accompanies it, will not be thrown away; if it be, he is a sloe, and no true-hearted Crab, and there's an end. For that life of the German conjuror which you speak of *Colerus de Vitâ Doctoris vix-Intelligibilis*, I perfectly remember the last evening we spent with Mrs Morgan and Miss Brent, in London Street, — (by that token we had raw rabbits for supper, and Miss B. prevailed upon me to take a glass of brandy and water, which is not my habit,) — I perfectly remember reading portions of that life in their parlour, and I think it must be among their

packages. It was the very last evening we were at that house. What is gone of that frank-hearted circle, Morgan, and his cos-lettuces? He ate walnuts better than any man I ever knew. Friendships in these parts stagnate.

One piece of news I know will give you pleasure, Rickman is made a Clerk to the House of Commons, £2000 a year with greater expectations — but that is not the news—but it is—that poor card-playing Phillips that has felt himself for so many years the outcast of Fortune, which feeling pervaded his very intellect till it made the destiny it feared, withering his hopes in the great and little games of life—by favour of the single star that ever shone upon him since his birth, has strangely stept into—Rickman's Secretaryship—sword, bag, House and all—from a hopeless £100 a year, eaten up aforehand with desperate debts, to a clear £400 or £500—it almost reconciles me to the belief of a moral government of the world. The man stares and gapes and seems to be always wondering at what has befaln him—he tries to be eager at cribbage, but alas! the source of that Interest is dried up for ever, he no longer plays for his next day's meal, or to determine whether he shall have a half dinner or a whole dinner, whether he shall buy a pair of black silk stockings or coax his old ones a week or two longer, the poor man's relish of a Trump, the Four Honours, is gone—and I do not know whether if we could get at the bottom of things whether poor star-doomed Phillips with his hair staring with despair was not a happier being than the sleek well-combed oily-pated Secretary that has succeeded. The gift is however clogged with one stipulation, that the Secretary do remain a Single Man. Here I smell Rickman. Thus at once are gone all Phillips' matrimonial dreams, those verses which he wrote himself and those which a surprised Pen (with modesty let me speak as I name

no names) endited for him to Elisa, Amelia, &c.— for Phillips was always a-wive-hunting, probably, from the circumstance of his having formed an extreme rash connection in early life which paved the way to all his after misfortunes, but there is an obstinacy in human nature which such accidents only serve to whet on to try again. Pleasure thus at two entrances quite shut out, I hardly know how to determine of Phillips' result of happiness. He appears satisfyed, but never those bursts of gaiety, those moment-rules from the Cave of Despondency, that used to make his face shine and show the lines that care had marked in it. I would bet an even wager he marries secretly. The Speaker find it out, and he is reverted to his old Liberty and a hundred pounds a year. These are but speculations—I can think of no other news.

I am going to eat turbot, turtle, venison, marrow pudding, — cold punch, claret, Madeira, — at our annual feast, at half-past four this day. Mary has ordered the bolt to my bedroom door inside to be taken off and a practicable latch to be put on, that I mayn't bar myself in and be suffocated by my neck-cloth, so we have taken all precautions, three watch-men are engaged to carry the body upstairs — Pray for me. They keep bothering me, (I'm at office,) and my ideas are confused. Let me know if I can be of any service as to books. God forbid the Architectonican should be sacrificed to a foolish scruple of some book proprietor, as if books did not belong with the highest propriety to those that understand 'em best. C. Lamb.

CLXXVI. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Aug. 14, 1814.

Dear Wordsworth,—I cannot tell you how pleased I was at the receipt of the great armful of poetry

which you have sent me; and to get it before the rest of the world too! I have gone quite through with it, and was thinking to have accomplished that pleasure a second time before I wrote to thank you, but M. Burney came in the night (while we were out) and made holy theft of it, but we expect restitution in a day or two. It is the noblest conversational poem I ever read — a day in Heaven. The part (or rather main body) which has left the sweetest odour on my memory (a bad term for the remains of an impression so recent) is the Tales of the Churchyard;—the only girl among seven brethren, born out of due time, and not duly taken away again, — the deaf man and the blind man; — the Jacobite and the Hanoverian, whom antipathies reconcile; the Scarron-entry of the rusticating parson upon his solitude;—these were all new to me too. My having known the story of Margaret (at the beginning), a very old acquaintance, even as long back as when I saw you first at Stowey, did not make her reappearance less fresh. I don't know what to pick out of this best of books upon the best subjects for partial naming. That gorgeous sunset is famous; I think it must have been the identical one we saw on Salisbury Plain five years ago, that drew Phillips from the card-table, where he had sat from rise of that luminary to its unequalled set; but neither he nor I had gifted eyes to see those symbols of common things glorified, such as the prophets saw them in that sunset—the wheel, the potter's clay, the wash-pot, the wine-press, the almond-tree rod, the baskets of figs, the fourfold visaged head, the throne, and Him that sat thereon.

One feeling I was particularly struck with, as what I recognised so very lately at Harrow Church on entering in it after a hot and secular day's pleasure, the instantaneous coolness and calming, almost transforming properties of a country church

just entered; a certain fragrance which it has, either from its holiness, or being kept shut all the week, or the air that is let in being pure country, exactly what you have reduced into words; but I am feeling that which I cannot express. Reading your lines about it fixed me for a time, a monument in Harrow Church. Do you know it? with its fine long spire, white as washed marble, to be seen, by vantage of its high site, as far as Salisbury spire itself almost.

I shall select a day or two, very shortly, when I am coolest in brain, to have a steady second reading, which I feel will lead to many more, for it will be a stock book with me while eyes or spectacles shall be lent me. There is a great deal of noble matter about mountain scenery, yet not so much as to overpower and discountenance a poor Londoner or south-countryman entirely, though Mary seems to have felt it occasionally a little too powerfully, for it was her remark during reading it, that by your system it was doubtful whether a liver in towns had a soul to be saved. She almost trembled for that invisible part of us in her.

Save for a late excursion to Harrow, and a day or two on the banks of the Thames this Summer, rural images were fast fading from my mind, and by the wise provision of the Regent, all that was country-fy'd in the Parks is all but obliterated. The very colour of green is vanished; the whole surface of Hyde Park is dry crumbling sand (*Arabia Arenosa*), not a vestige or hint of grass ever having grown there. Booths and drinking-places go all round it for a mile and half, I am confident—I might say two miles in circuit. The stench of liquors, *bad* tobacco, dirty people and provisions, conquers the air, and we are stifled and suffocated in Hyde Park.

Order after order has been issued by Lord Sidmouth in the name of the Regent (acting in behalf of

his Royal father) for the dispersion of the varlets, but in vain. The *vis unita* of all the publicans in London, Westminster, Marylebone, and miles round, is too powerful a force to put down. The Regent has raised a phantom which he cannot lay. There they'll stay probably for ever. The whole beauty of the place is gone—that lake-look of the Serpentine—it has got foolish ships upon it; but something whispers to have confidence in Nature and its revival—

> At the coming of the *milder day*,
> These monuments shall all be overgrown.

Meantime I confess to have smoked one delicious pipe in one of the cleanliest and goodliest of the booths; a tent rather—

> "Oh call it not a booth!"

erected by the public spirit of Watson, who keeps the Adam and Eve at Pancras, (the ale-houses have all emigrated, with their train of bottles, mugs, corkscrews, waiters, into Hyde Park—whole ale-houses, with all their ale!) in company with some of the Guards that had been in France, and a fine French girl, habited like a princess of banditti, which one of the dogs had transported from the Garonne to the Serpentine. The unusual scene in Hyde Park, by candle-light, in open air,—good tobacco, bottled stout, —made it look like an interval in a campaign, a repose after battle. I almost fancied scars smarting, and was ready to club a story with my comrades of some of my lying deeds. After all, the fireworks were splendid; the rockets in clusters, in trees and all shapes, spreading about like young stars in the making, floundering about in space (like unbroke horses,) till some of Newton's calculations should fix them; but then they went out. Any one who could see 'em, and the still finer showers of gloomy rain-fire that fell sulkily and angrily from 'em, and could

go to bed without dreaming of the last day, must be as hardened an atheist as . . . .

The conclusion of this epistle getting gloomy, I have chosen this part to desire *our* kindest loves to Mrs Wordsworth and to Dorothea. Will none of you ever be in London again?

Again let me thank you for your present, and assure you that fireworks and triumphs have not distracted me from receiving a calm and noble enjoyment from it, (which I trust I shall often,) and I sincerely congratulate you on its appearance.

With kindest remembrances to you and your household, we remain, yours sincerely.

C. Lamb and Sister.

CLXXVII. TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

26th August, 1814.

Let the hungry soul rejoice, there is corn in Egypt. Whatever thou hast been told to the contrary by designing friends, who perhaps inquired carelessly, or did not inquire at all, in hope of saving their money, there is a stock of "Remorse" on hand, enough, as Pople conjectures, for seven years' consumption; judging from experience of the last two years. Methinks it makes for the benefit of sound literature, that the best books do not always go off best. Inquire in seven years' time for the *Rokebys* and the *Laras*, and where shall they be found? — fluttering fragmentally in some thread-paper; whereas thy *Wallenstein* and thy *Remorse* are safe on Longman's or Pople's shelves, as in some Bodleian; there they shall remain; no need of a chain to hold them fast — perhaps for ages — tall copies — and people shan't run about hunting for them as in old Ezra's shrievalty they did for a Bible, almost without effect till the great-great-grand-niece (by the mother's side) of Jeremiah or Ezekiel (which

was it?) remembered something of a book, with odd reading in it, that used to lie in the green closet in her aunt Judith's bedchamber.

Thy caterer, Price, was at Hamburgh when last Pople heard of him, laying up for thee like some miserly old father for his generous-hearted son to squander.

Mr Charles Aders, whose books also pant for that free circulation which thy custody is sure to give them, is to be heard of at his kinsmen, Messrs Jameson and Aders, No. 7, Laurence Pountney Lane, London, according to the information which Crabius with his parting breath left me. Crabius is gone to Paris. I prophesy he and the Parisians will part with mutual contempt. His head has a twist Allemagne, like thine, dear mystic.

I have been reading Madame Stael on Germany: an impudent clever woman. But if *Faust* be no better than in her abstract of it, I counsel thee to let it alone. How canst thou translate the language of cat-monkeys? Fie on such fantasies! But I will not forget to look for *Proclus*. It is a kind of book which, when we meet with it, we shut up faster than we opened it. Yet I have some bastard kind of recollection that somewhere, some time ago, upon some stall or other, I saw it. It was either that or *Plotinus*, or Saint Augustine's *City of God*. So little do some folks value, what to others, *sc.* to you, "well used," had been the "Pledge of Immortality." Bishop Bruno I never touched upon. Stuffing too good for the brains of such a "Hare" as thou describest. May it burst his pericranium, as the gobbets of fat and turpentine (a nasty thought of the seer) did that old dragon in the Apocrypha! May he go mad in trying to understand his author! May he lend the third volume of him before he has quite translated the second, to a friend who shall lose it, and so spoil the publication, and may his

friend find it and send it him just as thou or some such less dilatory spirit shall have announced the whole for the press. So I think I have answered all thy questions except about Morgan's cos-lettuce. The first personal peculiarity I ever observed of him (all worthy souls are subject to 'em) was a particular kind of rabbit-like delight in munching salads with oil without vinegar after dinner — a steady contemplative browsing on them—didst never take note of it? Canst think of any other queries in the solution of which I can give thee satisfaction? Do you want any books that I can procure for you? Old Jimmy Boyer is dead at last. Trollope has got his living, worth £1000 a-year net. See, thou sluggard, thou heretic-sluggard, what mightest thou not have arrived at! Lay thy animosity against Jimmy in the grave. Do not *entail* it on thy posterity.

CHARLES LAMB.

CLXXVIII. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

1814.

My dear W.—I have scarce time or quiet to explain my present situation, how unquiet and distracted it is, owing to the absence of some of my compeers, and to the deficient state of payments at E. I. H., owing to bad peace speculations in the calico market. (I write this to W. W., Esq., Collector of Stamp Duties for the conjoint Northern Counties, not to W. W., Poet.) I go back, and have for many days past, to evening work, generally at the rate of nine hours a day. The nature of my work, too, puzzling and hurrying, has so shaken my spirits, that my sleep is nothing but a succession of dreams of business I cannot do, of assistants that give me no assistance, of terrible responsibilities. I reclaimed your book, which Hazlitt has uncivilly kept, only two days ago, and have made shift to read it again with shattered brain.

It does not lose—rather some parts have come out with a prominence I did not perceive before—but such was my aching head yesterday (Sunday), that the book was like a mountain landscape to one that should walk on the edge of a precipice; I perceive beauty dizzily. Now, what I would say is, that I see no prospect of a quiet half-day, or hour even, till this week and the next are past. I then hope to get four weeks' absence, and if *then* is time enough to begin, I will most gladly do what is required, though I feel my inability, for my brain is always desultory, and snatches off hints from things, but can seldom follow a "work" methodically. But that shall be no excuse. What I beg you to do is, to let me know from Southey, if that will be time enough for the *Quarterly*, *i.e.* suppose it done in three weeks from this date (19th Sept.): if not, it is my bounden duty to express my regret, and decline it. Mary thanks you, and feels highly grateful for your "Patent of Nobility," and acknowledges the author of the *Excursion* as the legitimate Fountain of Honour. We both agree that, to our feeling, Ellen is best as she is. To us there would have been something repugnant in her challenging her Penance as a Dowry: the fact is explicable; but how few are those to whom it would have been rendered explicit! The unlucky reason of the detention of the *Excursion* was Hazlitt and we having a misunderstanding. He blowed us up about six months ago, since which the union hath snapt; but M. Burney borrowed it for him, and after reiterated messages I only got it on Friday. His remarks had some vigour in them; particularly something about an old ruin being *too modern for your Primeval Nature, and about a lichen.* I forget the passage, but the whole wore a slovenly air of despatch. That objection which M. Burney had imbibed from him about Voltaire I explained to M. B. (or tried) exactly on your principle of its being a characteristic speech. That it was no

settled comparative estimate of Voltaire with any of his own tribe of buffoons—no injustice, even if *you* spoke it, for I dared say you never could relish *Candide*. I know I tried to get through it about a twelvemonth since, and couldn't for the dulness. Now I think I have a wider range in buffoonery than you. Too much toleration perhaps.

I finish this after a raw ill-baked dinner fast gobbled up to set me off to office again, after working there till near four. Oh how I wish I were a rich man! even though I were squeezed camel-fashion at getting through that needle's eye that is spoken of in the *Written Word*. Apropos; are you a Christian? or is it the Pedler and the Priest that are?

I find I miscalled that celestial splendour of the mist going off, a *sunset*. That only shows my inaccuracy of head.

Do, pray, indulge me by writing an answer to the point of time mentioned above, or *let Southey*. I am ashamed to go bargaining in this way, but indeed I have no time I can reckon on till the first week in October. God send I may not be disappointed in that! Coleridge swore in a letter to me he would review the *Excursion* in the *Quarterly*. Therefore, though *that* shall not stop me, yet if I can do any thing *when* done, I must know of him if he has any thing ready, or I shall fill the world with loud exclaims.

I keep writing on, knowing the postage is no more for much writing, else so fagged and dispirited I am with cursed India House work, I scarce know what I do. My left arm reposes on the *Excursion*. I feel what it would be in quiet. It is now a sealed book.

C. Lamb.

CLXXIX. TO THE SAME

December, 1814.

Dear W.—Your experience about tailors seems to be in point blank opposition to Burton, as much as the author of the *Excursion* does, *toto cœlo*, differ in his notion of a country life from the picture which W. H. has exhibited of the same. But, with a little explanation, you and B. may be reconciled. It is evident that he confined his observations to the genuine native London tailor. What freaks tailor-nature may take in the country is not for him to give account of. And certainly some of the freaks recorded do give an idea of the persons in question being beside themselves, rather than in harmony with the common, moderate, self-enjoyment of the rest of mankind. A flying tailor, I venture to say, is no more *in rerum naturâ* than a flying horse or a gryphon. His wheeling his airy flight from the precipice you mention had a parallel in the melancholy Jew who toppled from the monument. Were his limbs ever found? Then, the man who cures diseases by words is evidently an inspired tailor. Burton never affirmed that the art of sewing disqualified the practiser of it from being a fit organ for supernatural revelation. He never enters into such subjects. 'Tis the common, uninspired tailor which he speaks of. Again, the person who makes his smiles to be *heard* is evidently a man under possession; a demoniac tailor. A greater hell than his own must have a hand in this. I am not certain that the cause which you advocate has much reason for triumph. You seem to me to substitute light-headedness for light-heartedness by a trick, or not to know the difference. I confess, a grinning tailor would shock me. Enough of tailors!

The "'scapes" of the great god Pan, who appeared among your mountains some dozen years since, and his narrow chance of being submerged by the swains,

afforded me much pleasure. I can conceive the water-nymphs pulling for him. He would have been another Hylas—W. Hylas. In a mad letter which Capel Lofft wrote to *M[onthly] M[agazine]* Philips, (now Sir Richard,) I remember his noticing a metaphysical article of Pan, signed H., and adding, "I take your correspondent to be the same with Hylas." Hylas had put forth a pastoral just before. How near the unfounded conjecture of the certainly inspired Lofft (unfounded as we thought it) was to being realised! I can conceive him being "good to all that wander in that perilous flood." One J. Scott, (I know no more) is editor of the *Champion*. Where is Coleridge?

That Review you speak of, I am only sorry it did not appear last month. The circumstances of haste and peculiar bad spirits under which it was written would have excused its slightness and inadequacy, the full load of which I shall suffer from its lying by so long, as it will seem to have done, from its postponement. I write with great difficulty, and can scarce command my own resolution to sit at writing an hour together. I am a poor creature, but I am leaving off gin. I hope you will see good-will in the thing. I had a difficulty to perform not to make it all panegyric; I have attempted to personate a mere stranger to you; perhaps with too much strangeness. But you must bear that in mind when you read it, and not think that I am, in mind, distant from you or your poem, but that both are close to me, among the nearest of persons and things. I do but act the stranger in the Review. Then, I was puzzled about extracts, and determined upon not giving one that had been in the *Examiner*; for extracts repeated give an idea that there is a meagre allowance of good things. By this way, I deprived myself of *Sir Alfred Irthing*, and the reflections that conclude his story, which are the flower of the poem. Hazlitt had given

the reflections before me. *Then* it is the first review I ever did, and I did not know how long I might make it. But it must speak for itself, if Gifford and his crew do not put words in its mouth, which I expect. Farewell. Love to all. Mary keeps very bad. C. LAMB.

CLXXX. TO THE SAME

December, 1814.

Dear Wordsworth—I told you my Review was a very imperfect one. But what you will see in the *Quarterly* is a spurious one, which Mr Baviad Gifford has palmed upon it for mine. I never felt more vexed in my life than when I read it. I cannot give you an idea of what he has done to it, out of spite at me, because he once suffered me to be called a lunatic in his Review. The *language* he has altered throughout. Whatever inadequateness it had to its subject, it was, in point of composition, the prettiest piece of prose I ever writ: and so my sister (to whom alone I read the MS.) said. That charm, if it had any, is all gone: more than a third of the substance is cut away, and that not all from one place, but *passim*, so as to make utter nonsense. Every warm expression is changed for a nasty cold one.

I have not the cursed alteration by me; I shall never look at it again; but for a specimen, I remember I had said the poet of the *Excursion* "walks through common forests as through some Dodona or enchanted wood, and every casual bird that flits upon the boughs, like that miraculous one in Tasso, but in language more piercing than any articulate sounds, reveals to him far higher love-lays." It is now (besides half-a-dozen alterations in the same half-dozen lines) "but in language more *intelligent* reveals to him";—that is one I remember.

But that would have been little, putting his damn'd shoemaker phraseology (for he was a shoemaker) in-

stead of mine, which has been tinctured with better authors than his ignorance can comprehend;—for I reckon myself a dab at *prose*;—verse I leave to my betters: God help them, if they are to be so reviewed by friend and foe as you have been this quarter! I have read "It won't do." But worse than altering words: he has kept a few members only of the part I had done best, which was to explain all I could of your "Scheme of Harmonies," as I had ventured to call it, between the external universe and what within us answers to it. To do this I had accumulated a good many short passages, rising in length to the end, weaving in the extracts as if they came in as a part of the text naturally, not obtruding them as specimens. Of this part a little is left, but so as, without conjuration, no man could tell what I was driving at. A proof of it you may see (though not judge of the whole of the injustice) by these words. I had spoken something about "natural methodism"; and after follows, "and *therefore* the tale of Margaret should have been postponed" (I forget my words, or his words); now the reasons for postponing it are as deducible from what goes before as they are from the 104th Psalm. The passage whence I deduced it has vanished, but clapping a colon before a *therefore* is always reason enough for Mr Baviad Gifford to allow to a reviewer that is not himself. I assure you my complaints are well founded. I know how sore a word altered makes one; but, indeed, of this review the whole complexion is gone. I regret only that I did not keep a copy. I am sure you would have been pleased with it, because I have been feeding my fancy for some months with the notion of pleasing you. Its imperfection or inadequateness in size and method I knew; but for the *writing part* of it I was fully satisfied; I hoped it would make more than atonement. Ten or twelve distinct passages come to my mind, which are gone; and what is left is, of

course, the worse for their having been there; the eyes are pulled out, and the bleeding sockets are left.

I read it at Arch's shop with my face burning with vexation secretly, with just such a feeling as if it had been a review written against myself, making false quotations from me. But I am ashamed to say so much about a short piece. How are *you* served! and the labours of years turned into contempt by scoundrels!

But I could not but protest against your taking that thing as mine. Every *pretty* expression, (I know there were many,) every warm expression, (there was nothing else,) is vulgarised and frozen. But if they catch me in their camps again, let them spitchcock me! They had a right to do it, as no name appears to it; and Mr Shoemaker Gifford, I suppose, never waived a right he had since he commenced author. God confound him and all caitiffs! C. L.

CLXXXI. TO THE SAME

[1815.]

Dear Wordsworth,—You have made me very proud with your successive book presents. I have been carefully through the two volumes, to see that nothing was omitted which used to be there. I think I miss nothing but a character in the antithetic manner, which I do not know why you left out,—the moral to the boys building the giant, the omission whereof leaves it, in my mind, less complete,—and one admirable line gone (or something come instead of it), "the stone-chat, and the glancing sand-piper," which was a line quite alive. I demand these at your hand. I am glad that you have not sacrificed a verse to those scoundrels. I would not have had you offer up the poorest rag that lingered upon the stript shoulders of little Alice Fell, to have atoned all their malice; I

would not have given 'em a red cloak to save their souls. I am afraid lest that substitution of a shell (a flat falsification of the history) for the household implement, as it stood at first, was a kind of tub thrown out to the beast, or rather thrown out for him. The tub was a good honest tub in its place, and nothing could fairly be said against it. You say you made the alteration for the "friendly reader," but the "malicious" will take it to himself. Damn 'em, if you give 'em an inch, &c. The Preface is noble, and such as you should write. I wish I could set my name to it, *Imprimatur*,—but you have set it there yourself, and I thank you. I would rather be a door-keeper in your margin, than have their proudest text swelling with my eulogies. The poems in the volumes which are new to me are so much in the old tone that I hardly received them as novelties. Of those of which I had no previous knowledge, the "Four Yew Trees," and the mysterious company which you have assembled there, most struck me—"Death the Skeleton and Time the Shadow." It is a sight not for every youthful poet to dream of; it is one of the last results he must have gone thinking on for years for. "Laodamia" is a very original poem; I mean original with reference to your own manner. You have nothing like it. I should have seen it in a strange place, and greatly admired it, but not suspected its derivation.

Let me in this place, for I have writ you several letters naming it, mention that my brother, who is a picture-collector, has picked up an undoubtable picture of Milton. He gave a few shillings for it, and could get no history with it, but that some old lady had had it for a great many years. Its age is ascertainable from the state of the canvas, and you need only see it to be sure that it is the original of the heads in the Tonson editions, with which we are all so well familiar. Since I saw you I have had a treat in the

reading way, which comes not every day, the Latin Poems of V. Bourne, which were quite new to me. What a heart that man had! all laid out upon town schemes, a proper counterpoise to *some people's* rural extravaganzas. Why I mention him is, that your "Power of Music" reminded me of his poem of "The Ballad Singer in the Seven Dials." Do you remember his epigram on the old woman who taught Newton the A B C? which, after all, he says, he hesitates not to call Newton's "Principia." I was lately fatiguing myself with going through a volume of fine words by Lord Thurlow; excellent words; and if the heart could live by words alone, it could desire no better regales; but what an aching vacuum of matter! I don't stick at the madness of it, for that is only a consequence of shutting his eyes and thinking he is in the age of the old Elizabeth poets. From thence I turned to Bourne. What a sweet, unpretending, pretty-mannered, *matter-ful* creature! sucking from every flower, making a flower of every thing, his diction all Latin, and his thoughts all English. Bless him! Latin wasn't good enough for him. Why wasn't he content with the language which Gay and Prior wrote in?

I am almost sorry that you printed extracts from those first poems, or that you did not print them at length. They do not read to me as they do altogether. Besides, they have diminished the value of the original, which I possess as a curiosity. I have hitherto kept them distinct in my mind as referring to a particular period of your life. All the rest of your poems are so much of a piece, they might have been written in the same week; these decidedly speak of an earlier period. They tell more of what you had been reading. We were glad to see the poems "by a female friend." The one of the Wind is masterly, but not new to us. Being only three, perhaps you might have clapt a D. at the corner, and let it have past as

a printer's mark to the uninitiated, as a delightful hint to the better instructed. As it is, expect a formal criticism on the poems of your female friend, and she must expect it. I should have written before, but I am cruelly engaged, and like to be. On Friday I was at office from ten in the morning (two hours dinner except) to eleven at night; last night till nine. My business and office business in general have increased so; I don't mean I am there every night, but I must expect a great deal of it. I never leave till four, and do not keep a holiday now once in ten times, where I used to keep all red-letter days, and some five days besides, which I used to dub Nature's holidays. I have had my day. I had formerly little to do. So of the little that is left of life, I may reckon two-thirds as dead, for time that a man may call his own is his life; and hard work and thinking about it taints even the leisure hours,—stains Sunday with work-day contemplations. This is Sunday: and the head-ache I have is part late hours at work the two preceding nights, and part later hours over a consoling pipe afterwards. But I find stupid acquiescence coming over me. I bend to the yoke, and it is almost with me and my household as with the man and his consort—

> "To them each evening had its glittering star,
> And every Sabbath Day its golden sun"—

to such straits am I driven for the life of life, Time! O that from that superfluity of holiday leisure my youth wasted, "Age might but take some hours youth wanted not!" N.B.—I have left off spirituous liquors for four or more months, with a moral certainty of its lasting. Farewell, dear Wordsworth!

O happy Paris, seat of idleness and pleasure! from some returned English I hear that not such a thing as a counting-house is to be seen in her streets,—scarce a desk. Earthquakes swallow up this mercan-

tile city and its "gripple merchants," as Drayton hath it—"born to be the curse of this brave isle!" I invoke this, not on account of any parsimonious habits the mercantile interest may have, but, to confess truth, because I am not fit for an office.

Farewell, in haste, from a head that is too ill to methodize, a stomach too weak to digest, and all out of tune. Better harmonies await you! C. LAMB.

Excuse this maddish letter: I am too tired to write *in formâ*.

CLXXXII. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

London, 6th May, 1815.

Dear Southey,—I have received from Longman a copy of *Roderick*, with the Author's Compliments, for which I much thank you. I don't know where I shall put all the noble presents I have lately received in that way: the *Excursion*, Wordsworth's two last vols., and now *Roderick*, have come pouring in upon me like some irruption from Helicon. The story of the brave Maccabee was already, you may be sure, familiar to me in all its parts. I have, since the receipt of your present, read it quite through again, and with no diminished pleasure. I don't know whether I ought to say that it has given me more pleasure than any of your long poems. *Kehama* is doubtless more powerful, but I don't feel that firm footing in it that I do in *Roderick*: my imagination goes sinking and floundering in the vast spaces of unopened-before systems and faiths; I am put out of the pale of my old sympathies; my moral sense is almost outraged; I can't believe, or with horror am made to believe, such desperate chances against Omnipotence, such disturbances of faith to the centre; the more potent the more painful the spell. Jove, and his brotherhood of Gods, tottering with the giant assailings, I can bear, for the soul's hopes are not struck at in such

contests; but your Oriental almighties are too much types of the intangible prototype to be meddled with without shuddering. One never connects what are called the attributes of Jupiter.—I mention only what diminishes my delight at the wonder-workings of *Kehama*, not what impeaches its power, which I confess with trembling; but *Roderick* is a comfortable poem. It reminds me of the delight I took in the first reading of the *Joan of Arc*. It is maturer and better than *that*, though not better to me now than that was then. It suits me better than *Madoc*. I am at home in Spain and Christendom. I have a timid imagination, I am afraid. I do not willingly admit of strange beliefs, or out-of-the-way creeds or places. I never read books of travels, at least not farther than Paris or Rome. I can just endure Moors, because of their connection as foes with Christians; but Abyssinians, Ethiops, Esquimaux, Dervises, and all that tribe, I hate. I believe I fear them in some manner. A Mahometan turban on the stage, though enveloping some well-known face (Mr Cook or Mr Maddox, whom I see another day good Christian and English waiters, innkeepers, &c.), does not give me pleasure unalloyed. I am a Christian, Englishman, Londoner, *Templar*. God help me when I come to put off these snug relations, and to get abroad into the world to come! I shall be like *the crow on the sand*, as Wordsworth has it; but I won't think on it: no need, I hope, yet.

The parts I have been most pleased with, both on first and second readings, perhaps, are Florinda's palliation of Roderick's crime, confessed to him in his disguise—the retreat of the Palayos family first discovered—his being made king—"For acclamation one form must serve *more solemn for the breach* of *old observances*." Roderick's vow is extremely fine, and his blessing on the vow of Alphonso:

> "Towards the troop he spread his arms,
> As if the expanded soul diffused itself,
> And carried to all spirits *with the act*
> Its affluent inspiration."

It struck me forcibly that the feeling of these last lines might have been suggested to you by the Cartoon of Paul at Athens. Certain it is that a better motto or guide to that famous attitude can nowhere be found. I shall adopt it as explanatory of that violent but dignified motion.

I must read again Landor's *Julian*. I have not read it some time. I think he must have failed in Roderick, for I remember nothing of him, nor of any distinct character as a character—only fine-sounding passages. I remember thinking also he had chosen a point of time after the event, as it were, for Roderick survives to no use; but my memory is weak, and I will not wrong a fine poem by trusting to it.

The notes to your poem I have not read again: but it will be a take-downable book on my shelf, and they will serve sometimes at breakfast, or times too light for the text to be duly appreciated. Though some of 'em—one of the serpent penance—is serious enough, now I think on't. Of Coleridge I hear nothing, nor of the Morgans. I hope to have him like a re-appearing star, standing up before me some time when least expected in London, as has been the case whilere.

I am *doing* nothing (as the phrase is) but reading presents, and walk away what of the day hours I can get from hard occupation. Pray accept once more my hearty thanks, and expression of pleasure for your remembrance of me. My sister desires her kind respects to Mrs S. and to all at Keswick.

Yours truly,

C. Lamb.

The next present I look for is the *White Doe*.

Have you seen Mat. Betham's *Lay of Marie*? I think it very delicately pretty as to sentiment, &c.

R. Southey, Esq.,
Keswick, near Penrith,
Cumberland.

CLXXXIII. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

1815.

Dear Wordsworth,—The more I read of your last two volumes, the more I feel it necessary to make my acknowledgments for them in more than one short letter. The "Night Piece," to which you refer me, I meant fully to have noticed; but, the fact is, I come so fluttering and languid from business, tired with thoughts of it, frightened with the fears of it, that when I get a few minutes to sit down to scribble (an action of the hand now seldom natural to me—I mean voluntary pen-work) I lose all presential memory of what I had intended to say, and say what I can, talk about Vincent Bourne, or any casual image, instead of that which I had meditated, (by the way, I must look out V. B. for you). So I meant to mention "Yarrow Visited," with that stanza, "But thou that didst appear so fair"; than which I think no lovelier stanza can be found in the wide world of poetry;—yet the poem, on the whole, seems condemned to leave behind it a melancholy of imperfect satisfaction, as if you had wronged the feeling with which, in what preceded it, you had resolved never to visit it, and as if the Muse had determined, in the most delicate manner, to make you, and *scarce make you*, feel it. Else, it is far superior to the other, which has but one exquisite verse in it, the last but one, or the last two: this is all fine, except perhaps that *that* of "studious ease and generous cares" has a little tinge of the *less romantic* about it. "The Farmer of Tilsbury Vale" is a charming counterpart to "Poor Susan," with the addition of that delicacy towards

aberrations from the strict path, which is so fine in the "Old Thief and the Boy by his side," which always brings water into my eyes. Perhaps it is the worse for being a repetition; "Susan" stood for the representative of poor *Rus in Urbe*. There was quite enough to stamp the moral of the thing never to be forgotten; "bright volumes of vapour," &c. The last verse of Susan was to be got rid of, at all events. It threw a kind of dubiety upon Susan's moral conduct. Susan is a servant maid. I see her trundling her mop, and contemplating the whirling phenomenon through blurred optics; but to term her "a poor outcast" seems as much as to say that poor Susan was no better than she should be, which I trust was not what you meant to express. Robin Goodfellow supports himself without that *stick* of a moral which you have thrown away; but how I can be brought in *felo de omittendo* for that ending to the Boy-builders is a mystery. I can't say positively now,—I only know that no line oftener or readier occurs than that "Light-hearted boys, I will build up a Giant with you." It comes naturally, with a warm holiday, and the freshness of the blood. It is a perfect summer amulet, that I tie round my legs to quicken their motion when I go out a maying. (N.B.) I don't often go out a *may*ing;—*must* is the tense with me now. Do you take the pun? Young Romilly is divine; the reasons of his mother's grief being remediless. I never saw parental love carried up so high, towering above the other loves. Shakspeare had done something for the filial, in Cordelia, and, by implication, for the fatherly too, in Lear's resentment; he left it for you to explore the depths of the maternal heart. I get stupid, and flat, and flattering. What's the use of telling you what good things you have written, or—I hope I may add—that I know them to be good? Apropos—when I first opened upon the just mentioned poem, in a careless tone, I said to Mary, as if

putting a riddle, "*What is good for a bootless bene?*" To which, with infinite presence of mind, (as the jest-book has it,) she answered, "a shoeless pea." It was the first joke she ever made. Joke the second I make. You distinguish well, in your old preface, between the verses of Dr Johnson, of the "Man in the Strand," and those from "The Babes in the Wood." I was thinking, whether taking your own glorious lines—

> "And from the love which was in her soul
> For her youthful Romilly,"

which, by the love I bear my own soul, I think have no parallel in any of the best old ballads, and just altering them to—

> "And from the great respect she felt
> For Sir Samuel Romilly,"

would not have explained the boundaries of prose expression, and poetic feeling, nearly as well. Excuse my levity on such an occasion. I never felt deeply in my life if that poem did not make me feel, both lately and when I read it in MS. No alderman ever longed after a haunch of buck venison more than I for a spiritual taste of that "White Doe" you promise. I am sure it is superlative, or will be when *drest*, *i.e.* printed. All things read raw to me in MS.; to compare *magna parvis*, I cannot endure my own writings in that state. The only one which I think would not very much win upon me in print is "Peter Bell." But I am not certain. You ask me about your preface. I like both that and the supplement, without an exception. The account of what you mean by imagination is very valuable to me. It will help me to like some things in poetry better, which is a little humiliating in me to confess. I thought I could not be instructed in that science (I mean the critical), as I once heard old obscene, beastly Peter Pindar, in a

dispute on Milton, say he thought that if he had reason to value himself upon one thing more than another, it was in knowing what good verse was. Who looked over your proof sheets and left *ordebo* in that line of Virgil?

My brother's picture of Milton is very finely painted; that is, it might have been done by a hand next to Vandyke's. It is the genuine Milton, and an object of quiet gaze for the half-hour at a time. Yet though I am confident there is no better one of him, the face does not quite answer to Milton. There is a tinge of *petit* (or *petite*, how do you spell it?) querulousness about it; yet, hang it! now I remember better, there is not; it is calm, melancholy, and poetical. *One* of the copies of the poems you sent has precisely the same pleasant blending of a sheet of second volume with a sheet of first. I think it was page 245; but I sent it and had it rectified. It gave me in the first impetus of cutting the leaves, just such a cold squelch as going down a plausible turning and suddenly reading "No thoroughfare!" Robinson's is entire: I wish you would write more criticism about Spenser, &c. I think I could say something about him myself; but, Lord bless me! these "merchants and their spicy drugs," which are so harmonious to sing of, they lime-twig up my poor soul and body, till I shall forget I ever thought myself a bit of a genius! I can't even put a few thoughts on paper for a newspaper. I "engross" when I should "pen" a paragraph. Confusion blast all mercantile transactions, all traffic, exchange of commodities, intercourse between nations, all the consequent civilization, and wealth, and amity, and link of society, and getting rid of prejudices, and getting a knowledge of the face of the globe; and rotting the very firs of the forest, that look so romantic alive, and die into desks! *Vale.*

Yours, dear W., and all yours,

C. Lamb.

CLXXXIV. TO THE SAME

August 9th, 1815.

Dear Wordsworth,—We acknowledge with pride the receipt of both your handwritings, and desire to be ever had in kindly remembrance by you both and by Dorothy. Alsager, whom you call Alsinger, (and indeed he is rather *singer* than *sager*, no reflection upon his naturals neither,) is well, and in harmony with himself and the world. I don't know how he, and those of his constitution, keep their nerves so nicely balanced as they do. Or, have they any? Or, are they made of packthread? He is proof against weather, ingratitude, meat underdone, every weapon of fate. I have just now a jagged end of a tooth pricking against my tongue, which meets it half way, in a wantonness of provocation; and there they go at it, the tongue pricking itself, like the viper against the file, and the tooth galling all the gum inside and out to torture; tongue and tooth, tooth and tongue, hard at it; and I to pay the reckoning, till all my mouth is as hot as brimstone; and I'd venture the roof of my mouth, that at this moment, at which I conjecture my full-happiness'd friend is picking his crackers, that not one of the double rows of ivory in his privileged mouth has as much as a flaw in it, but all perform their functions, and, having performed them, expect to be picked, (luxurious steeds!) and rubbed down. I don't think he could be robbed, or have the house set on fire, or ever want money. I have heard him express a similar opinion of his own impassibility. I keep acting here Heautontimorumenos.

Mr Burney has been to Calais, and has come a travelled Monsieur. He speaks nothing but the Gallic Idiom. Field is on circuit. So now I believe I have given account of most that you saw at our Cabin.

Have you seen a curious letter in the *Morning Chronicle*, by C. L. [Capell Lofft,] the genius of absurdity, respecting Bonaparte's suing out his Habeas Corpus? That man is his own moon. He has no need of ascending into that gentle planet for mild influences.

Mary and I felt quite queer after your taking leave (you W. W.) of us in St Giles's. We wish we had seen more of you, but felt we had scarce been sufficiently acknowledging for the share we had enjoyed of your company. We felt as if we had been not enough *expressive* of our pleasure. But our manners *both* are a little too much on this side of too-much-cordiality. We want presence of mind and presence of heart. What we feel comes too late, like an after-thought impromptu. But perhaps you observed nothing of that which we have been painfully conscious of, and are every day in our intercourse with those we stand affected to through all the degrees of love. Robinson is on the circuit. Our panegyrist I thought had forgotten one of the objects of his youthful admiration, but I was agreeably removed from that scruple by the laundress knocking at my door this morning, almost before I was up, with a present of fruit from my young friend, &c. There is something inexpressibly pleasant to me in these *presents*, be it fruit, or fowl, or brawn, or *what not*. Books are a legitimate cause of acceptance. If presents be not the soul of friendship, undoubtedly they are the most spiritual part of the body of that intercourse. There is too much narrowness of thinking in this point. The punctilio of acceptance, methinks, is too confined and strait-laced. I could be content to receive money, or clothes, or a joint of meat from a friend. Why should he not send me a dinner as well as a dessert? I would taste him in the beasts of the field, and through all creation. Therefore did the basket of fruit of the juvenile Talfourd not displease me; not

that I have any thoughts of bartering or reciprocating these things. To send him any thing in return, would be to reflect suspicion of mercenariness upon what I know he meant a free-will offering. Let him overcome me in bounty. In this strife a generous nature loves to be overcome. You wish me some of your leisure. I have a glimmering aspect, a chink-light of liberty before me, which I pray God may prove not fallacious. My remonstrances have stirred up others to remonstrate, and altogether, there is a plan for separating certain parts of business from our department; which, if it take place, will produce me more time, *i.e.* my evenings free. It may be a means of placing me in a more conspicuous situation, which will knock at my nerves another way, but I wait the issue in submission. If I can but begin my own day at four o'clock in the afternoon, I shall think myself to have Eden days of peace and liberty to what I have had. As you say, how a man can fill three volumes up with an essay on the drama is wonderful; I am sure a very few sheets would hold all I had to say on the subject.

Did you ever read "Charron on Wisdom"? or "Patrick's Pilgrim"? If neither, you have two great pleasures to come. I mean some day to attack Caryl on Job, six folios. What any man can write, surely I may read. If I do but get rid of auditing warehousekeepers' accounts and get no worse-harassing task in the place of it, what a lord of liberty I shall be! I shall dance and skip, and make mouths at the invisible event, and pick the thorns out of my pillow, and throw 'em at rich men's night-caps, and talk blank verse, hoity-toity, and sing—"A clerk I was in London gay," "Ban, ban, Ca-Caliban," like the emancipated monster, and go where I like, up this street or down that alley. Adieu, and pray that it may be my luck.

Good bye to you all. C. Lamb.

CLXXXV. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Aug. 9th, 1815.

Dear Southey,—Robinson is not on the circuit, as I erroneously stated in a letter to W. W., which travels with this, but is gone to Brussels, Ostend, Ghent, &c. But his friends, the Colliers, whom I consulted respecting your friend's fate, remember to have heard him say, that Father Pardo had effected his escape, (the cunning greasy rogue!) and to the best of their belief is at present in Paris. To my thinking, it is small matter whether there be one fat friar more or less in the world. I have rather a taste for clerical executions, imbibed from early recollections of the fate of the excellent Dodd.

I hear Buonaparte has sued his habeas corpus, and the twelve judges are now sitting upon it at the Rolls.

Your boute-feu (bonfire) must be excellent of its kind. Poet Settle presided at the last great thing of the kind in London, when the pope was burnt in form. Do you provide any verses on this occasion?

Your fear for Hartley's intellectuals is just and rational. Could not the Chancellor be petitioned to remove him? His Lordship took Mr Betty from under the paternal wing. I think at least he should go through a course of matter-of-fact with some sober man after the mysteries. Could not he spend a week at Poole's before he goes back to Oxford? Tobin is dead. But there is a man in my office, a Mr Hedges, who proses it away from morning to night, and never gets beyond corporal and material verities. He'd get these crack-brain metaphysics out of the young gentleman's head as soon as any one I know. When I can't sleep o' nights, I imagine a dialogue with Mr Hedges, upon any given subject, and go prosing on in fancy with him, till I either laugh or fall asleep. I have literally found it answer. I am going to stand godfather; I don't like the business; I cannot muster up decorum for these occasions; I shall certainly disgrace the

font. I was at Hazlitt's marriage, and had like to have been turned out several times during the ceremony. Any thing awful makes me laugh. I misbehaved once at a funeral. Yet I can read about these ceremonies with pious and proper feelings. The realities of life only seem the mockeries. I fear I must get cured along with Hartley, if not too inveterate.

Don't you think that Louis the Desirable is in a sort of a quandary?

After all, Bonaparte is a fine fellow, as my barber says, and I should not mind standing bareheaded at his table to do him service in his fall. They should have given him Hampton Court or Kensington, with a tether extending forty miles round London. Qu. Would not the people have ejected the Brunswicks some day in his favour? Well, we shall see.

C. Lamb.

CLXXXVI. TO MATILDA BETHAM

[Endorsed Thirtieth Sept. 1815.]

I have alt'd that line to

That magic laugh bespeaks thee prest (?)

You had better consult Rogers about the *expence* of reprinting that sheet. An Erratum there must be about *kill.*

Dear Miss Betham,—Your letter has found me in such a distress'd state of mind owing partly to my situation at home and partly to perplexities at my office, that I am constrain'd to relinquish any further revision of Maria.

The blunders I have already overlooked have weighed upon me almost insufferably. I have sent the Printer your copy so far as it is clear to 106 page. "Happiness too great for me" is the last line of that page. The rest which I am not in any power to look over, being wretchedly ill, I send you back. I never was more ashamed of any thing, but my head has a

weight in it that forces me to give it up. Pray forgive me and write to the Printer where you would have it sent in future.

Yours truly, C. Lamb.

I have return'd the Printer all the copy of the first sheets.

CLXXXVII. TO THE SAME

Dear Miss Betham,—All this while I have been tormenting myself with the thought of having been ungracious to you, and you have been all the while accusing yourself. Let us absolve one another, and be quiet. My head is in such a state from incapacity for business, that I certainly know it to be my duty not to undertake the veriest trifle in addition. I hardly know how I can go on. I have tried to get some redress by explaining my health, but with no great success. No one can tell how ill I am, because it does not come out to the exterior of my face, but lies in my skull deep and invisible. I wish I was leprous, and black jaundiced skin-over, and that all was as well within as my cursed looks. You must not think me worse than I am. I am determined not to be overset, but to give up business rather, and get 'em to allow me a trifle for services past. Oh, that I had been a shoemaker or a baker, or a man of large independent fortune. Oh, darling laziness! heaven of Epicurus! Saint's Everlasting Rest! that I could drink vast potations of thee thro' unmeasured Eternity —Otium *cum* vel *sine* dignitate. Scandalous, dishonourable, any kind of *repose*. I stand not upon the *dignified sort*. Accursed, damned desks, trade, commerce, business. Inventions of that old original busybody, Satan—Sabbathless, restless Satan. A curse relieves; do you ever try it?

A strange letter to write to a lady, but more honeyed sentences will not distil. I dare not ask who

revises in my stead. I have drawn you into a scrape and am ashamed, but I know no remedy. My unwellness must be my apology. God bless you (tho' He curse the India House, and fire it *to the ground*), and may no unkind error creep into "Marie." May all its readers like it as well as I do, and everybody about you like its kind author no worse! Why the devil am I never to have a chance of scribbling my own free thoughts, verse or prose, again? Why must I write of tea and drugs, and price goods and bales of indigo? Farewell. C. LAMB.

Mary goes to her place on Sunday, I mean your maid, foolish Mary; she wants a very little brains only to be an excellent servant; she is excellently calculated for the country, where nobody has brains.

CLXXXVIII. TO WILLIAM AYRTON

Oct. 1815.

Dear Ayrton,—I am confident that the word *air* in your sense does not occur in Spenser or Shakspeare, much less in older writers. The first trace I remember of it is in Milton's sonnet to Lawrence, "Warble immortal verse and Tuscan air;" where, if the word had not been very newly familiarized, he would doubtless have used *airs* in the plural. Yours in haste,

C. L.

CLXXXIX. TO THE SAME

Oct. 14, 1815.

Dear A. Concerning "Air"—Shakspeare Twelfth night has "light airs & giddy recollections" I am sure I forget whereabouts—Also you will see another use of it in the Tempest (same sense) in Johnson's Dictionary. Spenser I still persist in, has it not, much less Chaucer. I have turned to all their places about music. C. L.

No doubt we had it from the Italian *Aria*—now Aria is not the latin Æra modernized, but Aer, is it not?

CXC. TO MISS HUTCHINSON

Thursday, 19th Oct. 1815.

Dear Miss H.,—I am forced to be the replier to your letter, for Mary has been ill, and gone from home these five weeks yesterday. She has left me very lonely and very miserable. I stroll about, but there is no rest but at one's own fireside, and there is no rest for me there now. I look forward to the worse half being past, and keep up as well as I can. She has begun to show some favourable symptoms. The return of her disorder has been frightfully soon this time, with scarce a six months' interval. I am almost afraid my worry of spirits about the E. I. House was partly the cause of her illness, but one always imputes it to the cause next at hand; more probably it comes from some cause we have no control over or conjecture of. It cuts sad great slices out of the time, the little time, we shall have to live together. I don't know but the recurrence of these illnesses might help me to sustain her death better than if we had had no partial separations. But I won't talk of death. I will imagine us immortal, or forget that we are otherwise. By God's blessing, in a few weeks we may be making our meal together, or sitting in the front row of the Pit at Drury Lane, or taking our evening walk past the theatres, to look at the outside of them, at least, if not to be tempted in. Then we forget we are assailable; we are strong for the time as rocks;—"the wind is tempered to the shorn Lambs." Poor C. Lloyd, and poor Priscilla! I feel I hardly feel enough for him; my own calamities press about me, and involve me in a thick integument not to be reached at by other folks' misfortunes. But I feel all I can—all the kindness I can, towards you all—God bless you! I hear nothing from Coleridge.

Yours truly,

C. Lamb.

Wm. Ayrton,
from a photograph kindly lent by E. Ayrton, Esq.

CXCI. TO THOMAS MANNING

Dec. 25th, 1815.

Dear old friend and absentee,—This is Christmas Day 1815 with us; what it may be with you I don't know, the 12th of June next year perhaps; and if it should be the consecrated season with you, I don't see how you can keep it. You have no turkeys; you would not desecrate the festival by offering up a withered Chinese Bantam, instead of the savoury grand Norfolcian holocaust, that smokes all around my nostrils at this moment from a thousand firesides. Then what puddings have you? Where will you get holly to stick in your churches, or churches to stick your dried tea-leaves (that must be the substitute) in? What memorials you can have of the holy time, I see not. A chopped missionary or two may keep up the thin idea of Lent and the wilderness; but what standing evidence have you of the Nativity? 'Tis our rosy-cheeked, homestalled divines, whose faces shine to the tune of "Unto us a child was born," faces fragrant with the mince-pies of half a century, that alone can authenticate the cheerful mystery. I feel my bowels refreshed with the holy tide; my zeal is great against the unedified heathen. Down with the Pagodas—down with the idols—Ching-chong-fo—and his foolish priesthood! Come out of Babylon, O my friend! for her time is come; and the child that is native, and the Proselyte of her gates, shall kindle and smoke together! And in sober sense what makes you so long from among us, Manning? You must not expect to see the same England again which you left.

Empires have been overturned, crowns trodden into dust, the face of the western world quite changed. Your friends have all got old—those you left blooming; myself, (who am one of the few that

remember you,) those golden hairs which you recollect my taking a pride in, turned to silvery and grey. Mary has been dead and buried many years: she desired to be buried in the silk gown you sent her. Rickman, that you remember active and strong, now walks out supported by a servant maid and a stick. Martin Burney is a very old man. The other day an aged woman knocked at my door, and pretended to my acquaintance. It was long before I had the most distant cognition of her; but at last, together, we made her out to be Louisa, the daughter of Mrs Topham, formerly Mrs Morton, who had been Mrs Reynolds, formerly Mrs Kenney, whose first husband was Holcroft, the dramatic writer of the last century. St Paul's church is a heap of ruins; the Monument isn't half so high as you knew it, divers parts being successively taken down which the ravages of time had rendered dangerous; the horse at Charing Cross is gone, no one knows whither; and all this has taken place while you have been settling whether Ho-hing-tong should be spelt with a ——, or a ——. For aught I see you might almost as well remain where you are, and not come like a Struldbrug into a world where few were born when you went away. Scarce here and there one will be able to make out your face. All your opinions will be out of date, your jokes obsolete, your puns rejected with fastidiousness as wit of the last age. Your way of mathematics has already given way to a new method, which after all is I believe the old doctrine of Maclaurin, new-vamped up with what he borrowed of the negative quantity of fluxions from Euler.

Poor Godwin! I was passing his tomb the other day in Cripplegate churchyard. There are some verses upon it written by Miss ——, which if I thought good enough I would send you. He was one of those who would have hailed your return, not with boisterous shouts and clamours, but with the

complacent gratulations of a philosopher anxious to promote knowledge as leading to happiness; but his systems and his theories are ten feet deep in Cripplegate mould. Coleridge is just dead, having lived just long enough to close the eyes of Wordsworth, who paid the debt to Nature but a week or two before. Poor Col., but two days before he died he wrote to a bookseller, proposing an epic poem on the "Wanderings of Cain," in twenty-four books. It is said he has left behind him more than forty thousand treatises in criticism, metaphysics, and divinity, but few of them in a state of completion. They are now destined, perhaps, to wrap up spices. You see what mutations the busy hand of Time has produced, while you have consumed in foolish voluntary exile that time which might have gladdened your friends—benefited your country; but reproaches are useless. Gather up the wretched reliques, my friend, as fast as you can, and come to your old home. I will rub my eyes and try to recognise you. We will shake withered hands together, and talk of old things—of St Mary's Church and the barber's opposite, where the young students in mathematics used to assemble. Poor Crips, that kept it afterwards, set up a fruiterer's shop in Trumpington Street, and for aught I know resides there still, for I saw the name up in the last journey I took there with my sister just before she died. I suppose you heard that I had left the India House, and gone into the Fishmongers' Almshouses over the bridge. I have a little cabin there, small and homely, but you shall be welcome to it. You like oysters, and to open them yourself; I'll get you some if you come in oyster time. Marshall, Godwin's old friend, is still alive, and talks of the faces you used to make.

Come as soon as you can.

C. Lamb.

CXCII. TO THE SAME

Dec. 26th, 1815.

Dear Manning,—Following your brother's example, I have just ventured one letter to Canton, and am now hazarding another (not exactly a duplicate) to St Helena. The first was full of unprobable romantic fictions, fitting the remoteness of the mission it goes upon; in the present I mean to confine myself nearer to truth as you come nearer home. A correspondence with the uttermost parts of the earth necessarily involves in it some heat of fancy, it sets the brain agoing, but I can think on the half-way house tranquilly. Your friends then are not all dead or grown forgetful of you through old age, as that lying letter asserted, anticipating rather what must happen if you kept tarrying on for ever on the skirts of creation, as there seemed a danger of your doing; but they are all tolerably well and in full and perfect comprehension of what is meant by Manning's coming home again. Mrs Kenney never lets her tongue run riot more than in remembrances of you. Fanny expends herself in phrases that can only be justified by her romantic nature. Mary reserves a portion of your silk, not to be buried in, (as the false nuncio asserts,) but to make up spick and span into a bran-new gown to wear when you come. I am the same as when you knew me, almost to a surfeiting identity. This very night I am going to *leave off tobacco*! Surely there must be some other world in which this unconquerable purpose shall be realised. The soul hath not her generous aspirings implanted in her in vain. One that you knew, and I think the only one of those friends we knew much of in common, has died in earnest. Poor Priscilla! Her brother Robert is also dead, and several of the grown-up brothers and sisters, in the compass of a very few years. Death has not otherwise meddled much in families that I

know. Not but he has his eye upon us, and is whetting his feathered dart every instant, as you see him truly pictured in that impressive moral picture, "The good man at the hour of death." I have in trust to put in the post four letters from Diss, and one from Lynn, to St Helena, which I hope will accompany this safe, and one from Lynn, and the one before spoken of from me, to Canton. But we all hope that these letters may be waste paper. I don't know why I have forborne writing so long; but it is such a forlorn hope to send a scrap of paper straggling over wide oceans! And yet I know, when you come home, I shall have you sitting before me at our fire-side just as if you had never been away. In such an instant does the return of a person dissipate all the weight of imaginary perplexity from distance of time and space! I'll promise you good oysters. Cory is dead that kept the shop opposite St Dunstan's; but the tougher materials of the shop survive the perishing frame of its keeper. Oysters continue to flourish there under as good auspices. Poor Cory! But if you will absent yourself twenty years together, you must not expect numerically the same population to congratulate your return which wetted the sea-beach with their tears when you went away. Have you recovered the breathless stone-staring astonishment into which you must have been thrown upon learning at landing that an Emperor of France was living in St Helena? What an event in the solitude of the seas! like finding a fish's bone at the top of Plinlimmon; but these things are nothing in our western world. Novelties cease to affect. Come and try what your presence can.

God bless you.—Your old friend,

C. Lamb.

CHAPTER II

AN INTERVAL AND A GREAT INAUGURATION
JANUARY 1816—DECEMBER 1820

CXCIII. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

April 9th, 1816.

Dear Wordsworth, — Thanks for the books you have given me and for all the books you mean to give me. I will bind up the Political Sonnets and Ode according to your suggestion. I have not bound the poems yet. I wait till people have done borrowing them. I think I shall get a chain and chain them to my shelves, *more Bodleiano*, and people may come and read them at chain's length. For of those who borrow, some read slow; some mean to read but don't read; and some neither read nor meant to read, but borrow to leave you an opinion of their sagacity. I must do my money-borrowing friends the justice to say that there is nothing of this caprice or wantonness of alienation in them. When they borrow my money they never fail to make use of it. Coleridge has been here about a fortnight. His health is tolerable at present, though beset with temptations. In the first place, the Covent Garden Manager has declined accepting his Tragedy, though (having read it) I see no reason upon earth why it might not have run a very fair chance, though it certainly wants a prominent part for a Miss O'Neil or a Mr Kean. However, he is going to-day to write to Lord Byron to get it

to Drury. Should you see Mrs C., who has just written to C. a letter, which I have given him, it will be as well to say nothing about its fate, till some answer is shaped from Drury. He has two volumes printing together at Bristol, both finished as far as the composition goes; the latter containing his fugitive poems, the former his Literary Life. Nature, who conducts every creature, by instinct, to its best end, has skilfully directed C. to take up his abode at a Chemist's Laboratory in Norfolk Street. She might as well have sent a *Helluo Librorum* for cure to the Vatican. God keep him inviolate among the traps and pitfalls! He has done pretty well as yet.

Tell Miss H[utchinson] my sister is every day wishing to be quietly sitting down to answer her very kind letter, but while C. stays she can hardly find a quiet time; God bless him!

Tell Mrs W. her postscripts are always agreeable. They are so legible too. Your manual-graphy is terrible, dark as Lycophron. "Likelihood," for instance, is thus typified. . . . I should not wonder if the constant making out of such paragraphs is the cause of that weakness in Mrs W.'s eyes, as she is tenderly pleased to express it. Dorothy, I hear, has mounted spectacles; so you have deoculated two of your dearest relations in life. Well, God bless you, and continue to give you power to write with a finger of power upon our hearts what you fail to impress, in corresponding lucidness, upon our outward eyesight!

Mary's love to all; she is quite well.

I am called off to do the deposits on Cotton Wool; but why do I relate this to you, who want faculties to comprehend the great mystery of deposits, of interests, of warehouse rent, and contingent fund? Adieu!

C. Lamb.

A longer letter when C. is gone back into the

country, relating his success, &c.—*my* judgment of *your* new books, &c., &c.—I am scarce quiet enough while he stays. Yours again, C. L.

CXCIV. TO THE SAME

Accountant's Office, 26th April, 1816.

Dear W.,—I have just finished the pleasing task of correcting the revise of the poems and letter. I hope they will come out faultless. One blunder I saw and shuddered at. The hallucinating rascal had printed *battered* for *battened*, this last not conveying any distinct sense to his gaping soul. The Reader (as they call 'em) had discovered it, and given it the marginal brand, but the substitutory *n* had not yet appeared. I accompanied his notice with a most pathetic address to the printer not to neglect the correction. I know how such a blunder would "batter at your peace." With regard to the works, the Letter I read with unabated satisfaction. Such a thing was wanted; called for. The parallel of Cotton with Burns I heartily approve. Izaak Walton hallows any page in which his reverend name appears. "Duty archly bending to purposes of general benevolence" is exquisite. The poems I endeavoured not to understand, but to read them with my eye alone, and I think I succeeded. (Some people will do that when they come out, you'll say.) As if I were to luxuriate to-morrow at some picture gallery I was never at before, and going by to-day by chance, found the door open, and had but five minutes to look about me, peeped in; just such a *chastised* peep I took with my mind at the lines my luxuriating eye was coursing over unrestrained, not to anticipate another day's fuller satisfaction. Coleridge is printing "Christabel," by Lord Byron's recommendation to Murray, with what he calls a vision, "Kubla Khan," which said

vision he repeats so enchantingly that it irradiates and brings heaven and elysian bowers into my parlour while he sings or says it; but there is an observation, "Never tell thy dreams," and I am almost afraid that "Kubla Khan" is an owl that won't bear day-light. I fear lest it should be discovered by the lantern of typography and clear reducting to letters no better than nonsense or no sense. When I was young I used to chant with ecstasy "MILD ARCADIANS EVER BLOOMING," till somebody told me it was meant to be nonsense. Even yet I have a lingering attachment to it, and I think it better than "Windsor Forest," "Dying Christian's Address," &c. Coleridge has sent his tragedy to Drury Lane Theatre. It cannot be acted this season; and by their manner of receiving, I hope he will be able to alter it to make them accept it for next. He is, at present, under the medical care of a Mr Gilman, (Killman ?) a Highgate apothecary, where he plays at leaving off laud—m. I think his essentials not touched: he is very bad; but then he wonderfully picks up another day, and his face, when he repeats his verses, hath its ancient glory; an archangel a little damaged. Will Miss H. pardon our not replying at length to her kind letter? We are not quiet enough; Morgan is with us every day, going betwixt Highgate and the Temple. Coleridge is absent but four miles, and the neighbourhood of such a man is as exciting as the presence of fifty ordinary persons. 'Tis enough to be within the whiff and wind of his genius for us not to possess our souls in quiet. If I lived with him or the Author of the *Excursion*, I should, in a very little time, lose my own identity, and be dragged along in the current of other people's thoughts, hampered in a net. How cool I sit in this office, with no possible interruption further than what I may term *material*! There is not as much metaphysics in thirty-six of the people here as there is in the first page of Locke's "Treatise

on the Human Understanding," or as much poetry as in any ten lines of the "Pleasures of Hope," or more natural "Beggar's Petition." I never entangle myself in any of their speculations. Interruptions, if I try to write a letter even, I have dreadful. Just now, within four lines, I was called off for ten minutes to consult dusty old books for the settlement of obsolete errors. I hold you a guinea you don't find the chasm where I left off, so excellently the wounded sense closed again and was healed.

N.B.—Nothing said above to the contrary, but that I hold the personal presence of the two mentioned potent spirits at a rate as high as any; but I pay dearer. What amuses others robs me of myself: my mind is positively discharged into their greater currents, but flows with a willing violence. As to your question about work; it is far less oppressive to me than it was, from circumstances. It takes all the golden part of the day away, a solid lump, from ten to four; but it does not kill my peace as before. Some day or other I shall be in a taking again. My head aches, and you have had enough. God bless you!

C. Lamb.

CXCV. TO MATILDA BETHAM

E. I. H., June 1, 1816.

Dear Miss Betham,—I have sent your *very pretty lines* to Southey in a frank, as you requested. Poor S., what a grievous loss he must have had! Mary and I rejoice in the prospect of seeing you soon in town. Let *us* be among the very first persons you come to see. Believe me that you can have no friends who respect and love you more than ourselves. Pray present our kind remembrances to Barbara, and to all to whom you may think they will be acceptable.

Yours very sincerely, C. Lamb.

Have you seen "Christabel" since its publication?

CXCVI. TO THE KENNEYS

Lonres, October month, 1816.

Dear Friends,—It is with infinite regret I inform you that the pleasing privilege of receiving Letters, by which I have for these twenty years gratified my friends and abused the liberality of the Company trading to the Orient, is now at an end. A cruel edict of the Directors has swept it away altogether. The devil sweep away their patronage also. Rascals, who think nothing of spunging on their employers for their venison and Turtle and Burgundy five days in the week, to the tune of five thousand pounds a year, now find out that the profits of trade will not allow the innocent communications of thought between their underlings and their friends in distant provinces to proceed untaxed, thus withering up the heart of friendship and making the news of a friend's good health worse than indifferent; a tidings to be deprecated as bringing with it ungracious influences. Adieu, gentle correspondents, kindly interchange of soul, interchange of love, of opinions, of puns, and what not. Henceforth, a friend that does not stand in visible or palpable distance to me is nothing to me. They have not left to the bosom of friendship even that cheap intercourse of sentiment—the two-penny medium. The upshot is you must not direct any more letters through me. To me you may annually or biennially transmit a brief account of your goings on, in single sheet, from which, after I have deducted as much as the postage comes to, the remainder will be pure pleasure. But no more of those pretty commissions and counter-commissions, orders and revoking of orders, obscure messages and obscurer explanations, by which the intellects of Marshall and Fanny used to be kept in a pleasing perplexity at the moderate cost of six or seven shillings a week. In short, you must use me no longer as a go-between. Henceforth I write up No Thoroughfare.

Well, and how far is Saint Wallery suer Some from Paris, and do you get wine and walnuts tolerable, and the vintage, does it suffer from the wet. I take it the wine of this season will be all wine and water. And have you Plays and Green rooms, and Fanny Kellies to chat with of an evening, and is the air purer than the old gravel pits, and the bread so much whiter as they say? Lord, what things you see that travel. I daresay the people are all French, wherever you go; what an overwhelming effect that must have. I have stood one of 'em at a time, but two I generally found overpowring; but then in their own vineyards may be they [are] endurable enough. They say marmosets in Senegambia are as pleasant as the day's long, jumping and chattering in the orange twigs; but transport 'em one by one over here into England, they turn into monkeys, some with tails, some without, and are obliged to be kept in cages. I suppose you know we've left the Temple pro tempore. By the way, this conduct has caused many strange surmises in a good lady of our acquaintance. She lately sent for a young gentleman of the India House, who lives opposite her at Monroe's the flute shop in Skinner Street, Snowhill,—I mention no names. You shall never get out of me what lady I mean,—on purpose to ask all he knew about us. I had previously introduced him to her whist table. Her enquiries embraced every possible thing that could be known of me—how I stood in the India House, what was the amount of my salary, what it was likely to be hereafter, whether I was thought clever in business, why I had taken country lodgings, why at Kingsland in particular, had I friends in that road, was anybody expected to visit me, did I wish for visitors, would an unexpected call be gratifying or not, would it be better that she sent beforehand, did any body come to see me, was not there a gentleman of the name of Morgan, did he know him, did'nt he come to see me,

did he know how Mr Morgan lived, she could never make out how they were maintained, was it true he lived out of the profits of a linen draper's shop in Bishopsgate Street ? (There she is a little right and a little wrong. M. is a Gentleman tobacconist). In short, she multiplied demands upon him till my friend, who is neither over modest nor nervous, declared he quite shuddered after laying me as bare to her curiosity as an anatomy. He trembled to think what she would ask next, my pursuits, inclinations, aversions, attachments (some, my dear friends, of a most delicate nature), she lugged 'em out of him, or would, had he been privy to them, as you pluck a horse bean from its iron stem, not as such tender rosebuds should be pulled. The fact is, I am come to Kingsland . . . and that is the truth of the matter; and nobody but yourselves should have extorted such a confession from me. I suppose you have seen by the Papers that Manning is arrived in England. He expressed much mortification at not finding Mrs Kenney in England. He looks a good deal sunburnt, and is got a little reserved, but I hope it will wear off. You will see by the Papers also that Dawe is Knighted. He has been painting the Princess of Coborg and her husband. This is all the news I could think of. Write to us, but not *by* us, for I have near ten correspondents of this latter description, and one or other comes pouring in every day, till my purse strings and heart strings crack. Bad habits are not all broken at once. I am sure that you will excuse the apparent indelicacy of mentioning this, but dear is my shirt but dearer is my skin, and 'tis too late when the steed is stole, to shut the stable door.

Well, and does Louisa grown [*sic*] a fine girl, is she likely to have her mother's complexion, and does Tom Polish in French air ?—Henry I mean—and Kenney is-not so fidgety. YOU sit down sometimes for a quiet half hour or so, and all is comfortable, no

bills (that you call writs), nor anything else (that you are equally sure to miss-call), to annoy you. Vive la gaite de cœur et la bell pastime, vive la beau France et revive mon cher Empreur. C. LAMB.

[*Endorsed*] Mr Kenney,
Saint Valery sur Somme, France.

CXCVII. TO WILLIAM AYRTON

Accountant's Office,
East India House,
Friday, Ap. 18, 1817.

Dear A.,—I am in your debt for a very delightful evening—I should say two—but Don Giovanni in particular was exquisite, and I am almost inclined to allow Music to be one of the Liberal Arts; which before I doubted. Could you let me have 3 Gallery Tickets —don't be startled—they shall positively be the last—or 2 or 1—for the same, for to-morrow or Tuesday. They will be of no use for to-morrow if not put in the post *this day* addrest to me, Mr Lamb, India House; if for any other evening, your usual blundering direction, No. 3 Middle Temple instead of 4 Inner Temple Lane will do. Yours, CH. LAMB.

Temple 12 May, (1817).

My dear friend—
Before I end—
Have you any
More orders for Don Giovanni
To give
Him that doth live
your faithful Zany?

Without raillery
I mean Gallery
ones.

For I am a person that shuns
All ostentation

And being at the top of the fashion,
And seldom go to operas
But in formâ Pauperis.
I go to the Play
In a very economical sort of way,
Rather to see
Than be seen.
Though I'm no ill sight
Neither
By candle light
And in some kinds of weather.
you might pit me
For weight
Against Kean.
But in a grand tragic scene
I'm nothing.
It would create a kind of loathing
To see me act Hamlet.
There'd be many a damn let
fly
At my presumption
If I should try
Being a fellow of no gumption.

By the way tell me candidly how you relish
This which they call the lapidary
Style?
Opinions vary.
The late Mr Mellish
Could never abide it.
He thought it vile,
And coxcombical.
My friend the Poet Laureat
Who is a great lawyer at
Anything comical
Was the first who tried it
But Mellish could never abide it.
But it signifies very little what Mellish said,
Because he is dead.

For who can confute
A body that's mute?
Or who would fight
With a senseless sprite?
Or think of troubling
An impenetrable old goblin
That's dead and gone
And stiff as a stone—
To convince him with arguments pro and con
As if he were some live logician
Bred up at Merton
or Mr Hazlitt the Metaphysician—
Ha! Mr Ayrton—
With all your rare tone—

For tell me how should an apparition
List to your call,
Though you talk'd for ever
Ever so clever
When his ear itself
By which he must hear or not hear at all
Is laid on the shelf?
or put the case
(For more grace)
It were a female spectre—
How could you expect her
To take much gust
In long speeches
With her tongue as dry as dust
In a sandy place
Where no peaches
Nor lemons nor limes nor oranges hang
To drop on the drouth of an arid harangue,
or quench
With their sweet drench
The fiery pangs which the worms inflict
With their endless nibblings
Like quibblings

Which the corpse may dislike, but can ne'er contradict
Ha! Mr Ayrton!
With all your rare tone—

I am
C. Lamb.

CXCVIII. TO BARRON FIELD

Aug. 31st, 1817.

My dear Barron,—The bearer of this letter so far across the seas is Mr Lawrey, who comes out to you as a missionary, and whom I have been strongly importuned to recommend to you as a most worthy creature by Mr Fenwick, a very old, honest friend of mine; of whom, if my memory does not deceive me, you have had some knowledge heretofore as editor of the *Statesman*; a man of talent, and patriotic. If you can show him any facilities in his arduous undertaking, you will oblige us much. Well, and how does the land of thieves use you? and how do you pass your time, in your extra-judicial intervals? Going about the streets with a lantern, like Diogenes, looking for an honest man? You may look long enough, I fancy. Do give me some notion of the manners of the inhabitants where you are. They don't thieve all day long do they? No human property could stand such continuous battery. And what do they do when they an't stealing?

Have you got a theatre? What pieces are performed? Shakspeare's, I suppose; not so much for the poetry, as for his having once been in danger of leaving his country on account of certain "small deer."

Have you poets among you? Damn'd plagiarists, I fancy, if you have any. I would not trust an idea, or a pocket-handkerchief of mine, among 'em. You are almost competent to answer Lord Bacon's prob-

lem, whether a nation of atheists can subsist together. You are practically in one:

> "So thievish 'tis, that the eighth commandment itself
> Scarce seemeth there to be."

Our old honest world goes on with little perceptible variation. Of course you have heard of poor Mitchell's death, and that G. Dyer is one of Lord Stanhope's residuaries. I am afraid he has not touched much of the residue yet. He is positively as lean as Cassius. Barnes is going to Demerara, or Essequibo, I am not quite certain which. Alsager is turned actor. He came out in genteel comedy at Cheltenham this season, and has hopes of a London engagement.

For my own history, I am just in the same spot, doing the same thing, (videlicet, little or nothing,) as when you left me; only I have positive hopes that I shall be able to conquer that inveterate habit of smoking which you may remember I indulged in. I think of making a beginning this evening, *viz.* Sunday, 31st Aug., 1817, not Wednesday, 2nd Feb., 1818, as it will be perhaps when you read this for the first time. There is the difficulty of writing from one end of the globe (hemispheres I call 'em) to another! Why, half the truths I have sent you in this letter will become lies before they reach you, and some of the lies (which I have mixed for variety's sake, and to exercise your judgment in the finding of them out) may be turned into sad realities before you shall be called upon to detect them. Such are the defects of going by different chronologies. Your "now" is not my "now"; and again, your "then," is not my "then"; but my "now" may be your "then," and vice versa. Whose head is competent to these things?

How does Mrs Field get on in her geography? Does she know where she is by this time? I am not sure sometimes you are not in another planet;

but then I don't like to ask Capt. Burney, or any of those that know any thing about it, for fear of exposing my ignorance.

Our kindest remembrances, however, to Mrs F., if she will accept of reminiscences from another planet, or at least another hemisphere. C. L.

CXCIX. TO CHARLES CHAMBERS

1 Sept. 1817.

With regard to a John Dory, which you desire to be particularly informed about,—I honour the fish, but it is rather on account of Quin, who patronised it, and whose taste (of a *dead* man) I had as lieve go by as any body's, Apicius and Heliogabalus excepted—this latter started nightingales' brains and peacocks' tongues as a garnish. Else, in *itself*, and trusting to my own poor single judgment, it hath not the moist, mellow, oleaginous, gliding, smooth descent from the tongue to the palate, thence to the stomach, etc., as your Brighton turbot hath, which I take to be the most friendly and familiar flavour of any that swims —most genial and at home to the palate.

Nor has it, on the other hand, that fine falling-off flakiness, that obsequious peeling off (as it were like a sea onion) which endears your cod's-head and shoulders to some appetites, that manly firmness, combined with a sort of womanish coming-in-pieces, which the same cod's-head and shoulders hath—where the *whole* is easily separable, pliant to a knife or spoon, but each *individual flake* presents a pleasing resistance to the opposed tooth—you understand me; these delicate subjects are necessarily obscure.

But it has a third flavour of its own, totally distinct from cod or turbot, which it must be owned may to some not injudicious palates render it acceptable; but to my unpractised tooth it presented rather a crude river-fish-flavour, like your pike or carp, and perhaps,

like them, should have been tamed and corrected by some laborious and well-chosen sauce. Still I always suspect a fish which requires so much of artificial settings-off. Your choicest relishes (like native loveliness) need not the foreign aid of ornament, but are, when unadorned (that is, with nothing but a little plain anchovy and a squeeze of lemon)—are then adorned the most. However, I shall go to Brighton again, next summer, and shall have an opportunity of correcting my judgment, if it is not sufficiently informed. I can only say that when Nature was pleased to make the John Dory so notoriously deficient in outward graces (as, to be sure, he is the very rhinoceros of fishes, the ugliest dog that swims, except perhaps the sea satyr, which I never saw, but which they say is terrible)—when she formed him with so few external advantages, she might have bestowed a more elaborate finish on his parts internal, and have given him a relish, a sapor, to recommend him, as she made Pope a poet to make up for making him crooked.

I am sorry to find that you have got a knack of saying things which are not sure to show your wit. If I had no wit, but what I must show at the expense of my virtue or my modesty, I had as lieve be as stupid as . . . at the tea warehouse. Depend upon it, my dear Chambers, that an ounce of integrity at our deathbed will stand us in more avail than all the wit of Congreve or . . . . For instance, you tell me a fine story about Truss, and his playing at Leamington, which I know to be false, because I have advice from Derby that he was whipt through the town on that very day you say he appeared in some character or other for robbing an old woman at church of a seal ring. And Dr Parr has been two months dead. So it won't do to scatter these random stories about among people that know anything. Besides, your forte is not invention. It is *judgment*, particularly

shown in your choice of dishes. We seem in that instance born under one star. I like you for liking hare. I esteem you for disrelishing minced veal. Liking is too cold a word: I love you for your noble attachment to the fat, unctuous juices of deer's flesh and the green unspeakable of turtle. I honour you for your endeavours to esteem and approve of my favourite, which I ventured to recommend to you as substitute for hare, bullock's heart, and I am not offended that you cannot taste it with *my* palate. A true son of Epicurus should reserve one taste peculiar to himself. For a long time I kept the secret about the exceeding deliciousness of the marrow of boiled knuckle of veal, till my tongue weakly ran out in its praises, and now it is prostitute and common. But I have made one discovery which I will not impart till my dying scene is over—perhaps it will be my last mouthful in this world: delicious thought, enough to sweeten (or rather make savoury) the hour of death. It is a little square bit about this size, in or near the knuckle- bone of a fried joint of . . . fat I can't call it, nor lean neither altogether, it is that beautiful compound which Nature must have made in Paradise, Park Venison, before she separated the two substances, the dry and the oleaginous, to punish sinful mankind: Adam ate them entire and inseparable, and this little taste of Eden in the knuckle-bone of a fried . . . seems the only relique of a Paradisaical state. When I die, an exact description of its topography shall be left in a cupboard with a key, inscribed on which these words, "C. Lamb, dying, imparts this to C. Chambers, as the only worthy depository of such a secret." You'll drop a tear. . . .

CC. MARY LAMB TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

1817.

My dear Miss Wordsworth,—Your kind letter has given us very great pleasnre; the sight of your handwriting was a most welcome surprise to us. We have heard good tidings of you by all our friends who were so fortunate as to visit you this Summer, and rejoice to see it confirmed by yourself. You have quite the advantage, in volunteering a letter; there is no merit in replying to so welcome a stranger.

We have left the Temple. I think you will be sorry to hear this. I know I have never been so well satisfied with thinking of you at Rydal Mount, as when I could connect the idea of you with your own Grasmere Cottage. Our rooms were dirty and out of repair, and the inconveniences of living in chambers became every year more irksome, and so, at last, we mustered up resolution enough to leave the good old place, that so long had sheltered us, and here we are, living at a brazier's shop, No. 20, in Russell Street, Covent Garden, a place all alive with noise and bustle; Drury Lane Theatre in sight from our front, and Covent Garden from our back windows. The hubbub of the carriages returning from the play does not annoy me in the least; strange that it does not, for it is quite tremendous. I quite enjoy looking out of the window, and listening to the calling up of the carriages, and the squabbles of the coachmen and linkboys. It is the oddest scene to look down upon; I am sure you would be amused with it. It is well I am in a cheerful place, or I should have many misgivings about leaving the Temple. I look forward with great pleasure to the prospect of seeing my good friend, Miss Hutchinson. I wish Rydal Mount, with all its inhabitants enclosed, were to be transplanted with her, and to remain stationary in the midst of Covent Garden.

I passed through the street lately where Mr and Mrs Wordsworth lodged; several fine new houses,

which were then just rising out of the ground, are quite finished, and a noble entrance made that way into Portland Place. I am very sorry for Mr De Quincey. What a blunder the poor man made when he took up his dwelling among the mountains! I long to see my friend Pypos. Coleridge is still at Little Hampton with Mrs Gilman; he has been so ill as to be confined to his room almost the whole time he has been there.

Charles has had all his Hogarths bound in a book; they were sent home yesterday, and now that I have them altogether, and perceive the advantage of peeping close at them through my spectacles, I am reconciled to the loss of them hanging round the room, which has been a great mortification to me—in vain I tried to console myself with looking at our new chairs and carpets, for we have got new chairs, and carpets covering all over our two sitting-rooms; I missed my old friends and could not be comforted—then I would resolve to learn to look out of the window, a habit I never could attain in my life, and I have given it up as a thing quite impracticable—yet when I was at Brighton, last Summer, the first week I never took my eyes off from the sea, not even to look in a book: I had not seen the sea for sixteen years. Mrs Morgan, who was with us, kept her liking, and continued her seat in the window till the very last, while Charles and I played truants, and wandered among the hills, which we magnified into little mountains, and *almost as good as* Westmoreland scenery: certainly we made discoveries of many pleasant walks, which few of the Brighton visitors have ever dreamed of—for, like as is the case in the neighbourhood of London, after the first two or three miles we were sure to find ourselves in a perfect solitude. I hope we shall meet before the walking faculties of either of us fail; you say you can walk fifteen miles with ease; that is exactly my stint, and

more fatigues me; four or five miles every third or fourth day, keeping very quiet between, was all Mrs Morgan could accomplish.

God bless you and yours. Love to all and each one.

I am ever yours most affectionately, M. Lamb.

CCI. TO THE SAME

Nov. 21st, 1817.

Dear Miss Wordsworth,—Here we are, transplanted from our native soil. I thought we never could have been torn up from the Temple. Indeed it was an ugly wrench, but like a tooth, now 'tis out, and I am easy. We never can strike root so deep in any other ground. This, where we are, is a light bit of gardener's mould, and if they take us up from it, it will cost no blood and groans, like man-drakes pulled up. We are in the individual spot I like best, in all this great city. The theatres, with all their noises. Covent Garden, dearer to me than any gardens of Alcinoüs, where we are morally sure of the earliest peas and 'sparagus. Bow Street, where the thieves are examined, within a few yards of us. Mary had not been here four-and-twenty hours before she saw a thief. She sits at the window working; and casually throwing out her eyes, she sees a concourse of people coming this way, with a constable to conduct the solemnity. These little incidents agreeably diversify a female life.

Mary has brought her part of this letter to an orthodox and loving conclusion, which is very well, for I have no room for pansies and remembrances. What a nice holyday I got on Wednesday by favour of a princess dying! C. L.

CCII. TO WILLIAM AYRTON

Russell House, Tuesday 25 Nov. 1817.

Dear A.,—We keep *our Thursday* (which is become a moveable feast) this evening, viz. Tuesday. We need not say that your company will be most acceptable. If you can persuade Mrs A. to accompany you, my sister begs me to say we shall consider the obligation double.—Yours truly C. L.

N.B.—Is not the above rather neatly worded? above my usual cut, I mean. It strikes me so.

CCIII. TO J. PAYNE COLLIER

The Garden of England, Dec. 10 [1817].

Dear J. P. C.,—I know how zealously you feel for our friend S. T. Coleridge; and I know that you and your family attended his lectures four or five years ago. He is in bad health, and worse mind: and unless something is done to lighten his mind he will soon be reduced to his extremities; and even these are not in the best condition. I am sure that you will do for him what you can; but at present he seems in a mood to do for himself. He projects a new course, not of physic, nor of metaphysic, nor a new course of life, but a new course of lectures on Shakespeare and Poetry. There is no man better qualified (always excepting number one): but I am pre-engaged for a series of dissertations on Indian and Indiapendence, to be completed, at the expense of the Company, in I know not (yet) how many volumes foolscap folio. I am busy getting up my Hindoo mythology; and, for the purpose, I am once more enduring Southey's curse (of "Kehama"). To be serious, Coleridge's state and affairs make me so; and there are particular reasons just now, and have been any time for the last twenty years, why he should succeed. He will do so with a little encouragement. I have not seen him lately; and he does not know that I am writing.

Yours (for Coleridge's sake) in haste,

C. LAMB.

CCIV. TO BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON

[No date.]

My dear Haydon,—I will come with pleasure to 22, Lisson Grove, North, at Rosse's, half-way up, right-hand side, if I can find it.

Yours, C. LAMB.

20, *Russell Court, Covent Garden, East.*
Half-way up, next the corner, Left-hand side.

Benjamin Robert Haydon, from a painting in the National Portrait Gallery, by his pupil, Georgiana M. Zornlin.

CCV. TO MRS WORDSWORTH

East-India House, 18th Feb., 1818.

My dear Mrs Wordsworth,—I have repeatedly taken pen in hand to answer your kind letter. My sister should more properly have done it, but she having failed, I consider myself answerable for her debts. I am now trying to do it in the midst of commercial noises, and with a quill which seems more ready to glide into arithmetical figures and names of gourds, cassia, cardamoms, aloes, ginger, or tea, than into kindly responses and friendly recollections. The reason why I cannot write letters at home, is, that I am never alone. Plato's—(I write to W. W. now)—Plato's double-animal parted never longed more to be reciprocally re-united in the system of its first creation than I sometimes do to be but for a moment single and separate. Except my morning's walk to the office, which is like treading on sands of gold for that reason, I am never so. I cannot walk home from office but some officious friend offers his unwelcome courtesies to accompany me. All the morning I am pestered. I could sit and gravely cast up sums in great books, or compare sum with sum, and write "paid" against this, and "unpaid" against t'other, and yet reserve in some corner of my mind "some darling thoughts all my own,"—faint memory of some passage in a book, or the tone of an absent friend's voice—a snatch of Miss Burrell's singing, or a gleam of Fanny Kelly's divine plain face. The two operations might be going on at the same time without thwarting, as the sun's two motions, (earth's I mean,) or as I sometimes turn round till I am giddy, in my back parlour, while my sister is walking longitudinally in the front; or as the shoulder of veal twists round with the spit, while the smoke wreathes up the chimney. But there are a set of amateurs of the Belles Lettres—the gay science—who come to me as a sort of rendezvous,

putting questions of criticism, of British Institutions, Lalla Rookhs, &c.—what Coleridge said at the lecture last night—who have the form of reading men, but, for any possible use reading can be to them, but to talk of, might as well have been Ante-Cadmeans born, or have lain sucking out the sense of an Egyptian hieroglyph as long as the pyramids will last, before they should find it. These pests worrit me at business, and in all its intervals, perplexing my accounts, poisoning my little salutary warming-time at the fire, puzzling my paragraphs if I take a newspaper, cramming in between my own free thoughts and a column of figures, which had come to an amicable compromise but for them. Their noise ended, one of them, as I said, accompanies me home, lest I should be solitary for a moment; he at length takes his welcome leave at the door; up I go, mutton on table, hungry as hunter, hope to forget my cares, and bury them in the agreeable abstraction of mastication; knock at the door, in comes Mr Hazlitt, or Mr Martin Burney, or Morgan Demi-gorgon, or my brother, or somebody, to prevent my eating alone—a process absolutely necessary to my poor wretched digestion. O the pleasure of eating alone!—eating my dinner alone! let me think of it. But in they come, and make it absolutely necessary that I should open a bottle of orange; for my meat turns into stone when any one dines with me, if I have not wine. Wine can mollify stones; then *that* wine turns into acidity, acerbity, misanthropy, a hatred of my interrupters—(God bless 'em! I love some of 'em dearly), and with the hatred, a still greater aversion to their going away. Bad is the dead sea they bring upon me, choking and deadening, but worse is the deader dry sand they leave me on, if they go before bed-time. Come never, I would say to these spoilers of my dinner; but if you come, never go! The fact is, this interruption does not happen very often; but every time it comes by sur-

prise, that present bane of my life, orange wine, with all its dreary stifling consequences, follows. Evening company I should always like had I any mornings, but I am saturated with human faces (*divine* forsooth!) and voices all the golden morning; and five evenings in a week would be as much as I should covet to be in company; but I assure you that is a wonderful week in which I can get two, or one to myself. I am never C. L., but always C. L. & Co. He who thought it not good for man to be alone, preserve me from the more prodigious monstrosity of being never by myself! I forget bed-time, but even there these sociable frogs clamber up to annoy me. Once a week, generally some singular evening that, being alone, I go to bed at the hour I ought always to be a-bed; just close to my bed-room window is the club-room of a public-house, where a set of singers, I take them to be chorus singers of the two theatres, (it must be *both of them*,) begin their orgies. They are a set of fellows (as I conceive) who, being limited by their talents to the burthen of the song at the play-houses, in revenge have got the common popular airs by Bishop, or some cheap composer, arranged for choruses; that is, to be sung all in chorus. At least I never can catch any of the text of the plain song, nothing but the Babylonish choral howl at the tail on't. "That fury being quenched"—the howl I mean—a burden succeeds of shouts and clapping, and knocking of the table. At length overtasked nature drops under it, and escapes for a few hours into the society of the sweet silent creatures of dreams, which go away with mocks and mows at cockcrow. And then I think of the words Christabel's father used (bless me, I have dipt in the wrong ink!) to say every morning by way of variety when he awoke:

> "Every knell, the Baron saith,
> Wakes us up to a world of death"—

or something like it. All I mean by this senseless interrupted tale, is, that by my central situation I am a little over-companied. Not that I have any animosity against the good creatures that are so anxious to drive away the harpy solitude from me. I like 'em, and cards, and a cheerful glass; but I mean merely to give you an idea, between office confinement and after-office society, how little time I can call my own. I mean only to draw a picture, not to make an inference. I would not that I know of have it otherwise. I only wish sometimes I could exchange some of my faces and voices for the faces and voices which a late visitation brought most welcome, and carried away, leaving regret, but more pleasure, even a kind of gratitude, at being so often favoured with that kind northern visitation. My London faces and noises don't hear me—I mean no disrespect, or I should explain myself, that instead of their return 220 times a year, and the return of W. W., &c., seven times in 104 weeks, some more equal distribution might be found. I have scarce room to put in Mary's kind love, and my poor name, C. Lamb.

W. H. goes on lecturing against W. W. and making copious use of quotations from said W. W. to give a zest to said lectures. S. T. C. is lecturing with success. I have not heard either him or H., but I dined with S. T. C. at Gilman's a Sunday or two since, and he was well and in good spirits. I mean to hear some of the course; but lectures are not much to my taste, whatever the lecturer may be. If *read*, they are dismal flat, and you can't think why you are brought together to hear a man read his works, which you could read so much better at leisure yourself. If delivered extempore, I am always in pain, lest the gift of utterance should suddenly fail the orator in the middle, as it did me at the dinner given in honour of me at the London Tavern.

"Gentlemen," said I, and there I stopped; the rest my feelings were under the necessity of supplying. Mrs Wordsworth *will* go on, kindly haunting us with visions of seeing the lakes once more, which never can be realised. Between us there is a great gulf, not of inexplicable moral antipathies and distances, I hope, as there seemed to be between me and that gentleman concerned in the Stamp Office, that I so strangely recoiled from at Haydon's. I think I had an instinct that he was the head of an office. I hate all such people—accountants' deputy accountants. The dear abstract notion of the East India Company, as long as she is unseen, is pretty, rather poetical; but as she makes herself manifest by the persons of such beasts, I loathe and detest her as the scarlet what-do-you-call-her of Babylon. I thought, after abridging us of all our red-letter days, they had done their worst; but I was deceived in the length to which heads of offices, those true liberty-haters, can go. They are the tyrants; not Ferdinand, nor Nero. By a decree passed this week, they have abridged us of the immemorially-observed custom of going at one o'clock of a Saturday, the little shadow of a holiday left us. Dear W. W., be thankful for liberty.

CCVI. TO MESSRS OLLIER

18th June, 1818.

Dear Sir, (whichever opens it),—I am going off to Birmingham. I find my books, whatever faculty of selling they may have (I wish they had more for {*your* / *my*} sake), are admirably adapted for giving away. You have been bounteous. Six more, and I shall have satisfied all just claims. Am I taking too great a liberty in begging you to send 4 as follows, and reserve 2 for me when I come home? That will make 31. Thirty-one times 12 is 372 shillings—

eighteen pounds twelve shillings!!! But here are my friends, to whom, if you *could* transmit them, as I shall be away a month, you will greatly

Oblige the obliged,

C. Lamb.

Mr Ayrton, James Street, Buckingham Gate;

Mr Alsager, Suffolk Street East, Southwark, by Horsemonger Lane.

And in one parcel, directed to R. Southey, Esq., Keswick, Cumberland:

One for R. S.;

And one for W^m^. Wordsworth, Esq.

If you will be kind enough simply to write "From the Author" in all 4, you will still further, &c.

Either Longman or Murray is in the frequent habit of sending books to Southey, and will take charge of the parcel. It will be as well to write in at the beginning thus:

"R. Southey, Esq. From the Author."

"W. Wordsworth, Esq. From the Author."

Then, if I can find the remaining 2 left for me at Russell Street when I return, rather than encroach any more on the heap, I will engage to make no more new friends, *ad infinitum*, yourselves being the last.

Yours truly,

C. L.

I think Southey will give us a lift in that damn'd *Quarterly*. I meditate an attack upon that Cobbler Gifford, which shall appear immediately after any favorable mention which S. may make in the *Quarterly*. It can't, in decent *gratitude*, *appear before*.

CCVII. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Monday, Oct. 26, 1818.

Dear Southey,—I am pleased with your friendly remembrances of my little things. I do not know

whether I have done a silly thing or a wise one, but it is of no great consequence. I run no risk, and care for no censures. My bread and cheese is stable as the foundations of Leadenhall Street, and if it hold out as long as the "foundations of our empire in the East," I shall do pretty well. You and W. W. should have had your presentation copies more ceremoniously sent, but I had no copies when I was leaving town for my holidays, and rather than delay, commissioned my bookseller to send them thus nakedly. By not hearing from W. W. or you, I began to be afraid Murray had not sent them. I do not see S. T. C. so often as I could wish. He never comes to me; and though his host and hostess are very friendly, it puts me out of my way to go see one person at another person's house. It was the same when he resided at Morgan's. Not but they also were more than civil; but, after all, one feels so welcome at one's own house. Have you seen poor Miss Betham's "Vignettes"? Some of them, the second particularly, "To Lucy," are sweet and good as herself, while she was herself. She is in some measure abroad again. I am *better than I deserve* to be. The hot weather has been such a treat! Mary joins in this little corner in kindest remembrances to you all. C. L.

CCVIII. TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Dec. 24th, 1818.

My dear Coleridge, — I have been in a state of incessant hurry ever since the receipt of your ticket. It found me incapable of attending you, it being the night of Kenney's new comedy, which has utterly failed. You know my local aptitudes at such a time; I have been a thorough rendezvous for all consultations. My head begins to clear up a little, but it has had bells in it. Thank you kindly for your ticket, though the mournful prognostic which ac-

companies it certainly renders its permanent pretensions less marketable; but I trust to hear many a course yet. You excepted Christmas week, by which I understood *next week*; I thought Christmas week was that which Christmas Sunday ushered in. We are sorry it never lies in your way to come to us; but, dear Mahomet, we will come to you. Will it be convenient to all the good people at Highgate, if we take a stage up, *not next Sunday*, but the following, viz., 3rd January, 1819? Shall we be too late to catch a skirt of the old out-goer? How the years crumble from under us! We shall hope to see you before then; but, if not, let us know if *then* will be convenient. Can we secure a coach home?

Believe me ever yours,

C. Lamb.

I have but one holiday, which is Christmas Day itself nakedly: no pretty garnish and fringes of St John's Day, Holy Innocents, &c., that used to bestud it all around in the calendar. *Improbe labor!* I write six hours every day in this candle-light fog-den at Leadenhall.

CCIX. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

1819.

Dear Wordsworth,—I received a copy of "Peter Bell" a week ago, and I hope the author will not be offended if I say I do not much relish it. The humour, if it is meant for humour, is forced; and then the price!—sixpence would have been dear for it. Mind, I do not mean *your* "Peter Bell," but *a* "Peter Bell" which preceded it about a week, and is in every bookseller's shop window in London, the type and paper nothing differing from the true one, the preface signed W. W., and the supplementary preface quoting as the author's words an extract from

the supplementary preface to the "Lyrical Ballads." Is there no law against these rascals? I would have this Lambert Simnel whipt at the cart's tail. Then there is Rogers! He has been re-writing your Poem of the Strid, and publishing it at the end of his "Human Life." Tie him up to the cart, hangman, while you are about it. Who started the spurious "P. B." I have not heard. I should guess, one of the sneering brothers, the vile Smiths; but I have heard no name mentioned. "Peter Bell" (not the mock one) is excellent; for its matter I mean. I cannot say that the style of it quite satisfies me. It is too lyrical. The auditors to whom it is feigned to be told, do not *arride me*. I would rather it had been told me, the reader, at once. "Hartleap Well" is the tale for me; in matter as good as this; in manner infinitely before it, in my poor judgment. Why did you not add "The Waggoner"?—Have I thanked you, though, yet, for "Peter Bell"? I would not *not have it* for a good deal of money. C—— is very foolish to scribble about books. Neither his tongue nor fingers are very retentive. But I shall not say any thing to him about it. He would only begin a very long story, with a very long face; and I see him far too seldom to teaze him with affairs of business or conscience when I do see him. He never comes near our house; and when we go to see him he is generally writing, or thinking. He is writing in his study till the dinner comes, and that is scarce over before the stage summons us away. The mock "P. B." had only this effect on me, that after twice reading it over in hopes to find something diverting in it, I reached your two books off the shelf, and set into a steady reading of them, till I had nearly finished both before I went to bed: the two of your last edition, of course, I mean: and in the morning I awoke determining to take down the *Excursion*. I wish the scoundrel imitator could know this. But

why waste a wish on him? I do not believe that paddling about with a stick in a pond, and fishing up a dead author, whom *his* intolerable wrongs had driven to that deed of desperation, would turn the heart of one of these obtuse literary Bells. There is no Cock for such Peters;—damn 'em! I am glad this aspiration came upon the red ink line. It is more of a bloody curse. I have delivered over your other presents to Alsager and G. D. A., I am sure, will value it, and be proud of the hand from which it came. To G. D. a poem is a poem. His own as good as any body's, and (God bless him!) any body's as good as his own; for I do not think he has the most distant guess of the possibility of one poem being better than another. The gods, by denying him the very faculty itself of discrimination, have effectually cut off every seed of envy in his bosom. But with envy, they excited curiosity also; and if you wish the copy again, which you destined for him, I think I shall be able to find it again for you, on his third shelf, where he stuffs his presentation copies, uncut, in shape and matter resembling a lump of dry dust; but on carefully removing that stratum, a thing like a pamphlet will emerge. I have tried this with fifty different poetical works that have been given G. D. in return for as many of his own performances; and I confess I never had any scruple in taking *my own* again, wherever I found it, shaking the adherences off; and by this means one copy of "my works" served for G. D., and, with a little dusting, was made over to my good friend Dr G——, who little thought whose leavings he was taking when he made that graceful bow. By the way, the Doctor is the only one of my acquaintance who bows gracefully; my town acquaintance, I mean. How do you like my way of writing with two inks? I think it is pretty and motley. Suppose Mrs W. adopts it, the next time she holds the pen for you.

My dinner waits. I have no time to indulge any longer in these laborious curiosities. God bless you, and cause to thrive and burgeon whatsoever you write, and fear no inks of miserable poetasters.

Yours truly, CHARLES LAMB.

Mary's love.

CCX. TO JOHN RICKMAN

E. I. House, the 21 May 1819.

Dear Rickman,—The gentleman who will present this letter holds a situation of considerable importance in the East India House, and is my very good friend. He is desirous of knowing whether it is too late to amend a mere error in figures which he has just discovered in an account made out by him and laid before the House yesterday. He will best explain to you what he means, and I am sure you will help him to the best of your power. Phillips is too ill for me to think of applying to him.

Why did we not see you last night?

Yours truly,
CHARLES LAMB.

CCXI. TO THOMAS MANNING

[May 28th, 1819.]

My dear M.,—I want to know how your brother is, if your have heard lately. I want to know about you. I wish you were nearer. How are my cousins, the Gladmans of Wheathamstead, and farmer Bruton? Mrs Bruton is a glorious woman.

"Hail, Mackery End"—

This is a fragment of a blank verse poem which I once meditated, but got no further. The E. I. H. has been thrown into a quandary by the strange phenomenon of poor Tommy Bye, whom I have known man and mad-man twenty-seven years, he being elder here than myself by nine years and more,

He was always a pleasant, gossiping, half-headed, muzzy, dozing, dreaming, walk-about, inoffensive chap; a little too fond of the creature—(who isn't at times?); but Tommy had not brains to work off an over-night's surfeit by ten o'clock next morning; and unfortunately, in he wandered the other morning drunk with last night, and with a superfœtation of drink taken in since he set out from bed. He came staggering under his double burthen, like trees in Java, bearing at once blossom, fruit, and falling fruit, as I have heard you or some other traveller tell, with his face literally as blue as the bluest firmament; some wretched calico, that he had mopped his poor oozy front with, had rendered up its native dye; and the devil a bit would he consent to wash it, but swore it was characteristic, for he was going to the sale of indigo, and set up a laugh which I did not think the lungs of mortal man were competent to. It was like a thousand people laughing, or the Goblin Page. He imagined afterwards that the whole office had been laughing at him, so strange did his own sounds strike upon his *non*sensorium! But Tommy has laughed his last laugh, and awoke the next day to find himself reduced from an abused income of £600 per annum to one-sixth of the sum, after thirty-six years' tolerably good service. The quality of mercy was not strained in his behalf: the gentle dews dropt not on him from heaven. It just came across me that I was writing to Canton. Will you drop in to-morrow night? Fanny Kelly is coming, if she does not cheat us. Mrs *Gold* is well, but proves "uncoined," as the lovers about Wheathamstead would say.

I have not had such a quiet half hour to sit down to a quiet letter for many years. I have not been interrupted above four times. I wrote a letter the other day, in alternate lines, black ink and red, and you cannot think how it chilled the flow of ideas. Next Monday is Whit Monday. What a reflection!

Mockery End in Hertfordshire

Twelve years ago, and I should have kept that and the following holidays in the fields a Maying. All of those pretty pastoral delights are over. This dead, everlasting dead desk,—how it weighs the spirit of a gentleman down! This dead wood of the desk, in stead of your living trees! But then again, I hate the Joskins, *a name for Hertfordshire bumpkins.* Each state of life has its inconvenience; but then again, mine has more than one. Not that I repine, or grudge, or murmur at my destiny. I have meat and drink, and decent apparel; I shall, at least, when I get a new hat.

A red-haired man has just interrupted me. He has broke the current of my thoughts. I haven't a word to add. I don't know why I send this letter, but I have had a hankering to hear about you some days. Perhaps it will go off before your reply comes. If it don't, I assure you no letter was ever welcomer from you, from Paris or Macao. C. LAMB.

CCXII. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

June 7th, 1819.

My Dear Wordsworth,—You cannot imagine how proud we are here of the dedication. We read it twice for once that we do the poem. I mean all through; yet "Benjamin" is no common favourite; there is a spirit of beautiful tolerance in it. It is as good as it was in 1806; and it will be as good in 1829, if our dim eyes shall be awake to peruse it. Methinks there is a kind of shadowing affinity between the subject of the narrative and the subject of the dedication; but I will not enter into personal themes; else, substituting * * * * * * for Ben, and the Honourable United Company of Merchants trading to the East Indies, for the master of the misused team, it might seem, by no far-fetched analogy, to point its dim warnings hitherward; but I reject the omen,

especially as its import seems to have been diverted to another victim.

I will never write another letter with alternate inks. You cannot imagine how it cramps the flow of the style. I can conceive Pindar, (I do not mean to compare myself to *him*,) by the command of Hiero, the Sicilian tyrant, (was not he the tyrant of some place? fie on my neglect of history!) I can conceive him by command of Hiero or Perillus set down to pen an Isthmian or Nemean panegyric in lines, alternate red and black. I maintain he couldn't have done it; it would have been a strait-laced torture to his muse; he would have call'd for the bull for a relief. Neither could Lycidas, nor the Chorics (how do you like the word?) of Samson Agonistes, have been written with two inks. Your couplets, with points, epilogues to Mr H.'s, &c., might be even benefited by the twyfount, where one line (the second) is for point, and the first for rhyme. I think the alteration would assist, like a mould. I maintain it, you could not have written your stanzas on pre-existence with two inks. Try another; and Rogers, with his silver standish, having one ink only, I will bet my "Ode on Tobacco," against the "Pleasures of Memory,"—and "Hope," too, shall put more fervour of enthusiasm into the same subject than you can with your two; he shall do it *stans pede in uno*, as it were.

The "Waggoner" is very ill put up in boards; at least it seems to me always to open at the dedication; but that is a mechanical fault. I re-read the "White Doe of Rylstone"; the title should be always written at length, as Mary Sabilla Novello, a very nice woman of our acquaintance, always signs hers at the bottom of the shortest note. Mary told her, if her name had been Mary Ann, she would have signed M. A. Novello, or M. only, dropping the A.; which makes me think, with some other trifles, that she understands something of human nature. My

pen goes galloping on most rhapsodically, glad to have escaped the bondage of two inks.

Manning had just sent it home, and it came as fresh to me as the immortal creature it speaks of. M. sent it home with a note, having this passage in it: "I cannot help writing to you while I am reading Wordsworth's poem. I am got into the third canto, and say that it raises my opinion of him very much indeed. 'Tis broad, noble, poetical, with a masterly scanning of human actions, absolutely above common readers. What a manly (implied) interpretation of (bad) party-actions, as trampling the Bible, &c.!" and so he goes on.

I do not know which I like best,—the prologue (the latter part especially) to "P. Bell," or the epilogue to "Benjamin." Yes, I tell stories; I do know I like the last best; and the "Waggoner" altogether is a pleasanter remembrance to me than the "Itinerant." If it were not, the page before the first page would and ought to make it so. The sonnets are not all new to me; of those which are new, the ninth I like best. Thank you for that to Walton. I take it as a favour done to me, that, being so old a darling of mine, you should bear testimony to his worth in a book containing a dedic——: I cannot write the vain word at full length any longer.

If, as you say, the "Waggoner," in some sort, came at my call, oh for a potent voice to call forth the "Recluse" from his profound dormitory, where he sleeps forgetful of his foolish charge—the world!

Had I three inks, I would invoke him! Talfourd has written a most kind review of J. Woodvil, &c., in the *Champion*. He is your most zealous admirer, in solitude and in crowds. H. Crabb Robinson gives me any dear prints that I happen to admire; and I love him for it and for other things. Alsager shall have his copy; but at present I have lent it *for a day only*, not choosing to part with my own. Mary's love.

How do you all do, amanuenses both—marital and sororal?

C. Lamb.

CCXIII. TO FRANCES MARIA KELLY

20 July 1819.

Dear Miss Kelly,—We had the pleasure, *pain* I might better call it, of seeing you last night in the new Play. It was a most consummate piece of Acting, but what a task for you to undergo! at a time when your heart is sore from real sorrow! it has given rise to a train of thinking, which I cannot suppress.

Would to God you were released from this way of life; that you could bring your mind to consent to take your lot with us, and throw off for ever the whole burden of your Profession. I neither expect or wish you to take notice of this which I am writing, in your present over occupied and hurried state.—But to think of it at your leisure. I have quite income enough, if that were all, to justify for me making such a proposal, with what I may call even a handsome provision for my survivor. What you possess of your own would naturally be appropriated to those, for whose sakes chiefly you have made so many hard sacrifices. I am not so foolish as not to know that I am a most unworthy match for such a one as you, but you have for years been a principal object in my mind. In many a sweet assumed character I have learned to love you, but simply as F. M. Kelly I love you better than them all. Can you quit these shadows of existence, and come and be a reality to us? can you leave off harassing yourself to please a thankless multitude, who know nothing of you, and begin at last to live to yourself and your friends?

As plainly & frankly as I have seen you give or refuse assent in some feigned scene, so frankly do me the justice to answer me. It is impossible I should feel injured or aggrieved by your telling me at once,

that the proposal does not suit you. It is impossible that I should ever think of molesting you with idle importunity and persecution after your mind once firmly spoken—but happier, far happier, could I have leave to hope a time might come, when our friends might be your friends; our interests yours; our book-knowledge, if in that inconsiderable particular we have any little advantage, might impart something to you, which you would every day have it in your power ten thousand fold to repay by the added cheerfulness and joy which you could not fail to bring as a dowry into whatever family should have the honor and happiness of receiving *you*, the most welcome accession that could be made to it.

In haste, but with entire respect and deepest affection, I subscribe myself

C. Lamb.

CCXIV. TO THE SAME

July 20th 1819.

Dear Miss Kelly,—*Your injunctions shall be obeyed to a tittle.* I feel myself in a lackadaisacal no-how-ish kind of a humour. I believe it is the rain, or something. I had thought to have written seriously, but I fancy I succeed best in epistles of mere fun; puns & *that* nonsense. You will be good friends with us, will you not? let what has past "break no bones" between us. You will not refuse us them next time we send for them?

Yours very truly,

C. L.

Do you observe the delicacy of not signing my full name? N. B. Do not paste that last letter of mine into your Book.

CCXV. TO JOSEPH COTTLE

[No date.]

Dear Sir,—It is so long since I have seen or heard from you, that I fear that you will consider a request I have to make as impertinent. About three years since, when I was in Bristol, I made an effort to see you by calling at Brunswick Square; but you were from home. The request I have to make is, that you would very much oblige me, if you have any small portrait of yourself, by allowing me to have it copied, to accompany a selection of the likenesses of "Living Bards" which a most particular friend of mine is making. If you have no objection, and would oblige me by transmitting such portrait, I will answer for taking the greatest care of it, and for its safe return. I hope you will pardon the liberty.

From an old friend and well-wisher,

CHARLES LAMB.

CCXVI. TO THE SAME

[No date.]

Dear Sir,—My friend, whom you have obliged by the loan of your picture, has had it very nicely copied (and a very spirited drawing it is; so every one thinks who has seen it). The copy is not much inferior to yours, done by a daughter of Joseph's R.A.

I accompany the picture with my warm thanks, both for that, and your better favour, the "Messiah," which I assure you I have read through with great pleasure. The verses have great sweetness, and a New Testament plainness about them which affected me very much. I could just wish that in page 63 you had omitted the lines 71 and 72, and had ended the period with—

> "The willowy brook was there, but that sweet sound—
> When to be heard again on earthly ground?"

Two very sweet lines, and the sense perfect.

And in page 154, line 68,

> "He spake, 'I come, ordain'd a world to save,
> To be baptized by thee in Jordan's wave.'"

These words are hardly borne out by the story, and seem scarce accordant with the modesty with which our Lord came to take his common portion among the baptismal candidates. They also anticipate the beauty of John's recognition of the Messiah, and the subsequent confirmation by the Voice and Dove.

You will excuse the remarks of an old brother bard, whose career, though long since pretty well stopped, was co-eval in its beginning with your own, and who is sorry his lot has been always to be so distant from you. It is not like that C. L. will see Bristol again; but, if J. C. should ever visit London, he will be a most welcome visitor to C. L. My sister joins in cordial remembrances.

Dear sir, yours truly,
CHARLES LAMB.

CCXVII. TO THE SAME

London, India House, May 26, 1829.

My dear Sir,—I am quite ashamed of not having acknowledged your kind present earlier; but that unknown something, which was never yet discovered, though so often speculated upon, which stands in the way of lazy folks answering letters, has presented its usual obstacle. It is not forgetfulness nor disrespect nor incivility, but terribly like all these bad things.

I have been in my time a great epistolary scribbler: but the passion, and with it the facility, at length wears out; and it must be pumped up again by the heavy machinery of duty or gratitude, when it should run free. I have read your "Fall of Cambria" with

as much pleasure as I did your "Messiah." Your Cambrian poem I shall be tempted to repeat oftenest, as human poems take me in a mood more frequently congenial than divine. The character of Llewellyn pleases me more than any thing else, perhaps; and then some of the lyrical pieces are fine varieties.

It was quite a mistake that I could dislike any thing you should write against Lord Byron; for I have a thorough aversion to his character, and a very moderate admiration of his genius: he is great in so little a way. To be a poet is to be the man, not a petty portion of occasional low passion worked up in a permanent form of humanity. Shakspeare has thrust such rubbishly feelings into a corner,—the dark dusky heart of Don John, in the *Much Ado about Nothing*. The fact is, I have not seen your "Expostulatory Epistle" to him. I was not aware, till your question, that it was out. I shall inquire, and get it forthwith.

Southey is in town, whom I have seen slightly; Wordsworth expected, whom I hope to see much of. I write with accelerated motion; for I have two or three bothering clerks and brokers about me, who always press in proportion as you seem to be doing something that is not business. I could exclaim a little profanely; but I think you do not like swearing.

I conclude, begging you to consider that I feel myself much obliged by your kindness; and shall be most happy at any and at all times to hear from you.

Dear sir, yours truly,

CHARLES LAMB.

CCXVIII. TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

[Nov. 25th, 1819.]

Dear Miss Wordsworth,—You will think me negligent: but I wanted to see more of Willy before I ventured to express a prediction. Till yesterday I

had barely seen him — *Virgilium tantum vidi* — but yesterday he gave us his small company to a bullock's heart, and I can pronounce him a lad of promise. He is no pedant, nor bookworm; so far I can answer. Perhaps he has hitherto paid too little attention to other men's inventions, preferring, like Lord Foppington, the "natural sprouts of his own." But he has observation, and seems thoroughly awake. I am ill at remembering other people's *bon mots*, but the following are a few:—Being taken over Waterloo Bridge, he remarked, that if we had no mountains, we had a fine river at least; which was a touch of the comparative: but then he added, in a strain which augured less for his future abilities as a political economist, that he supposed they must take at least a pound a week toll. Like a curious naturalist, he inquired if the tide did not come up a little salty. This being satisfactorily answered, he put another question, as to the flux and reflux; which being rather cunningly evaded than artfully solved by that she-Aristotle, Mary,—who muttered something about its getting up an hour sooner and sooner every day,—he sagely replied, "Then it must come to the same thing at last"; which was a speech worthy of an infant Halley! The lion in the 'Change by no means came up to his ideal standard; so impossible is it for Nature, in any of her works, to come up to the standard of a child's imagination! The whelps (lionets) he was sorry to find were dead; and on particular inquiry, his old friend the ourang-outang had gone the way of all flesh also. The grand tiger was also sick, and expected in no short time to exchange this transitory world for another, or none. But again, there was a golden eagle (I do not mean that of Charing) which did much arride and console him. William's genius, I take it, leans a little to the figurative; for, being at play at tricktrack (a kind of minor billiard-table which we keep for smaller

wights, and sometimes refresh our own mature fatigues with taking a hand at), not being able to hit a ball he had iterate aimed at, he cried out, "I cannot hit that beast!" Now the balls are usually called men, but he felicitously hit upon a middle term; a term of approximation and imaginative reconciliation; a something where the two ends of the brute matter (ivory), and their human and rather violent personification into men, might meet, as I take it: illustrative of that excellent remark, in a certain preface about imagination, explaining "Like a sea-beast that had crawled forth to sun himself!" Not that I accuse William Minor of hereditary plagiary, or conceive the image to have come *ex traduce*. Rather he seemeth to keep aloof from any source of imitation, and purposely to remain ignorant of what mighty poets have done in this kind before him; for, being asked if his father had ever been on Westminster Bridge, he answered that he did not know!

It is hard to discern the oak in the acorn, or a temple like St Paul's in the first stone which is laid; nor can I quite prefigure what destination the genius of William Minor hath to take. Some few hints I have set down, to guide my future observations. He hath the power of calculation, in no ordinary degree for a chit. He combineth figures, after the first boggle, rapidly; as in the tricktrack board, where the hits are figured. At first he did not perceive that 15 and 7 made 22; but by a little use he could combine 8 with 25, and 33 again with 16, which approacheth something in kind (far let me be from flattering him by saying in degree) to that of the famous American boy. I am sometimes inclined to think I perceive the future satirist in him, for he hath a subsardonic smile which bursteth out upon occasion; as when he was asked if London were as big as Ambleside; and indeed no other answer was given, or proper to

be given, to so ensnaring and provoking a question. In the contour of the skull, certainly I discern something paternal. But whether in all respects the future man shall transcend his father's fame, Time, the trier of Geniuses, must decide. Be it pronounced peremptorily at present, that Willy is a well-mannered child, and though no great student, hath yet a lively eye for things that lie before him.

Given in haste from my desk at Leadenhall.

Yours, and yours most sincerely,

C. Lamb.

A Series of Brief Notes, mostly of uncertain date, to Thomas Allsop

CCXIX.

Saturday, November 29, 1819.

Dear Sir,—Many thanks for your offer. I have desired the youth to wait upon you, if you will give him leave, that he may give his own answer to your kind proposal of trying to find something for him. My sister begs you will accept her thanks with mine. We shall be at home at all times, most happy to see you when you are in town. We are mostly to be found in an evening.

Your obliged, C. Lamb

CCXX.

Dear Sir,—We are most sorry to have missed you twice. We are at home to-night, to-morrow, and Thursday, and should be happy to see you any of these nights. Thanks for the shining bird.

Yours truly, C. L.

CCXXI.

Dear Sir,—The hairs of our head are numbered, but those which emanate from your heart defy arithmetic. I would send longer thanks, but your young man is blowing his fingers in the Passage.

Yours gratefully, C. L.

Bryan Waller Procter, from an engraving after the pencil sketch by Charles Martin.

CCXXII.

Dear Sir,—Your hare arrived in excellent order Last night, and I hope will prove the precursor of yourself on Sunday.

Why you should think it necessary to appease us with so many pleasant presents, I know not.

More acknowledgements when we meet; we dine at 3. Yours truly, C. LAMB.

Thursday.

CCXXIII.

My Dear Sir,—We shall hope to see you to-morrow evening to a rubber. Thanks for your very kind letter, and intentions respecting a bird.

Yours very truly,

C. LAMB.

CCXXIV. TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

January 10, 1820.

Dear Coleridge,—A letter written in the blood of your poor friend would indeed be of a nature to startle you; but this is nought but harmless red ink, or, as the witty mercantile phrase hath it, clerk's blood. Hang 'em! my brain, skin, flesh, bone, carcase, soul, time is all theirs. The Royal Exchange, Gresham's Folly, hath me body and spirit. I admire some of Lloyd's lines on you, and I admire your postponing reading them. He is a sad tattler; but this is under the rose. Twenty years ago he estranged one friend from me quite, whom I have been regretting, but never could regain since. He almost alienated you also from me, or me from you, I don't know which; but that breach is closed. The "dreary sea" is filled up. He has lately been at work "telling again," as they call it, a most gratuitous piece of mischief, and has caused a coolness betwixt me and (not a friend exactly, but) an

intimate acquaintance. I suspect also he saps Manning's faith in me, who am to Manning more than an acquaintance. Still I like his writing verses about you. Will your kind host and hostess give us a dinner next Sunday; and, better still, *not expect us* if the weather is very bad. Why you should refuse twenty guineas per sheet for Blackwood's, or any other magazine, passes my poor comprehension. But, as Strap says, "you know best." I have no quarrel with you about præprandial avocations; so don't imagine one. That Manchester sonnet I think very likely is Capel Lofft's. Another sonnet appeared with the same initials in the same paper, which turned out to be Procter's. What do the rascals mean? Am I to have the fathering of what idle rhymes every beggarly poetaster pours forth! Who put your marine sonnet "about Brownie" into *Blackwood!* I did not. So no more, till we meet.

Ever yours, C. L.

CCXXV. TO BARRON FIELD

London, 16 Aug., 1820.

Dear Field,—Captain Ogilvie, who conveys this note to you, and is now paying for the first time a visit to your remote shores, is the brother of a Gentleman intimately connected with the family of the *Whites*, I mean of Bishopsgate Street—and you will much oblige them and myself by any service or civilities you can shew him.

I do not mean this for an answer to your warm-hearted Epistle, which demands and shall have a much fuller return. We received your Australian First Fruits, of which I shall say nothing here, but refer you to * * * * of the *Examiner*, who speaks our mind on all public subjects. I can only assure you that both Coleridge and Wordsworth, and

also C. Lloyd, who has lately reappeared in the poetical horizon, were hugely taken with your Kangaroo.

When do you come back full of riches and renown, with the regret of all the honest, and all the other part of the colony? Mary swears she shall live to see it.

Pray are you King's or Queen's men in Sydney? Or have thieves no politics? Man, don't let this lie about your room for your bed sweeper or Major Domo to see; he mayn't like the last paragraph.

This is a dull and lifeless scroll. You shall have soon a tissue of truth and fiction impossible to be extricated, the interleavings shall be so delicate, the partitions perfectly invisible—it shall puzzle you till you return, and I will not explain it. Till then a . . . adieu, with kind remembrances of me both to you and . . . [*Signature and a few words torn off.*]

B. Field, Esq.
[*Endorsed*]
Barron Field, Esqr.
By favor of Captain Ogilvie.

CCXXVI. TO J. PROCTOR

(Postmarked 21 Nov. 1820.)

Can you meet W. W. at our house this Evening?
C. L.

CCXXVII. TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

[? 1820.]

Dear Coleridge,—Why will you make your visits which should give pleasure, matter of regret to your friends? You never come but you take away some folio, that is part of my existence. With a great deal of difficulty I was made to comprehend the extent of my loss. My maid, Becky, brought me a dirty

bit of paper, which contained her description of some book which Mr Coleridge had taken away. It was "Luster's Tables," which, for some time, I could not make out. "What! has he carried away any of the *tables*, Becky?" "No, it wasn't any tables, but it was a book that he called Luster's Tables." I was obliged to search personally among my shelves, and a huge fissure suddenly disclosed to me the true nature of the damage I had sustained. That book, Coleridge, you should not have taken away, for it is not mine; it is the property of a friend, who does not know its value, nor indeed have I been very sedulous in explaining to him the estimate of it; but was rather contented in giving a sort of corroboration to a hint that he let fall, as to its being suspected to be not genuine, so that in all probability it would have fallen to me as a deodand; not but I am as sure it is Luther's as I am sure that Jack Bunyan wrote the *Pilgrim's Progress*; but it was not for me to pronounce upon the validity of testimony that had been disputed by learneder clerks than I; so I quietly let it occupy the place it had usurped upon my shelves, and should never have thought of issuing an ejectment against it; for why should I be so bigoted as to allow rites of hospitality to none but my own books, children, &c.?—a species of egotism I abhor from my heart. No; let 'em all snug together, Hebrews and Proselytes of the gate; no selfish partiality of mine shall make distinction between them, I charge no warehouse room for my friend's commodities; they are welcome to come and stay as long as they like, without paying rent. I have several such strangers that I treat with more than Arabian courtesy. There's a copy of More's fine poem, which is none of mine, but I cherish it as my own. I am none of those churlish landlords that advertise the goods to be taken away in ten days' time, or then to be sold to pay expenses. So you

see I had no right to lend you that book. I may lend you my own books, because it is at my own hazard; but it is not honest to hazard a friend's property; I always make that distinction. I hope you will bring it with you, or send it by Hartley; or he can bring that, and you the *Polemical Discourses*, and come and eat some atoning mutton with us one of these days shortly. We are engaged two or three Sundays deep, but always dine at home on week-days at half-past four. So come all four—men and books I mean. My third shelf (northern compartment) from the top has two devilish gaps, where you have knocked out its two eye-teeth.

Your wronged friend,
C. Lamb.

Notes to Thomas Allsop, mostly Undated

CCXXVIII.

Monday [Jan.] 10, 1820.

Dear Sir,—We expected you here to-night; but as you have invited us to-morrow evening, we shall dispose of this evening as we intended to have done of to-morrow. We shall be with you by 8, and shall have taken Tea.

Your (not obliging but obliged)
C. and M. Lamb.

CCXXIX.

Tuesday evening, 15 February, 1820.

Dear Sir,—I have brought you Rosamund Bp. of Landaff's daughter's novel. We shall have a small party, on Thursday evening, if you will do us the favour to join it. Yours truly, C. Lamb.

CCXXX.

Dear Sir,—We expect Wordsworth to-morrow evening. Will you look in? C. L.

Russell House, Thursday.

CCXXXI.

[? June, 1820.]

Dear Sir,—Wordsworth is with us this Even. Can you come? We leave Covent Garden on Thursday for some time.

C. L.

CCXXXII.

1820.

Dear Sir,—We have arranged to be in the country Saturday and Sunday, having made an engagement to that effect. Pray let us see you on Thursday at Russell House.

With regrets and all proper feelings,
Yours truly,

C. L.

CCXXXIII.

Dear Sir,—You shall see us on Thursday, with M. B., if possible, about 8. We shall have Teaed.

Yours truly,

C. L.

M. B.'s direction is 26, James Street, Westminster —James, not St James, Street.

NOTES

NOTES TO "LETTERS"

At the time when the correspondence begins, the Lambs were living in lodgings at No. 7 Little Queen Street, Holborn, the site of the house being now occupied by Holy Trinity Church, which is contiguous to the Holborn Restaurant. The street is at this moment (Autumn 1903) in the act of disappearing, under the operations of the Holborn-to-Strand improvement scheme. The household consisted of the father and mother, Charles and Mary, and Sarah Lamb, who is always referred to as Aunt Hetty. John Lamb, junior, who had a good position in the South Sea House, lived elsewhere. Charles had been seven years from school and some five years at the India House, and seems to have made few friendships in the interval save among his former schoolfellows. The correspondence with Coleridge had not long begun. It seems probable that Coleridge had, from the time of his going up to Cambridge, rather forgotten his old schoolfellow, or allowed him to be lost sight of, for a few years; and that their re-union, and the true beginning of their *literary* friendship, dates from that Christmastide of 1794-5 which Coleridge spent in London, putting up at the *Salutation and Cat* in Newgate Street. It was at this time, I fancy, that Lamb first received a valid literary impulse from his friend, and not only an impulse, but some amount of new direction for his guidance in the world of books. I conceive him to have been, up to that point, a very docile pupil, in the main, of eighteenth-century models. How many letters had been exchanged in the interval between January 1795 and May 1796 we cannot well guess, but I fancy not many. Seven letters Coleridge had beside him (*these* he had been careful of, because they were full of literary criticisms) when there came to him the eighth letter—that of 27th September 1796—which at once re-

flected something of its tragic interest upon all that had gone before it. He preserved it, therefore, and those seven which were still extant, because his imagination now set his friend before his eyes as one invested with the sublimity of tragic fates, with the consecration of mysterious and divine dealings. "I look upon you," he said, "as a man called, by sorrow and anguish and a strange desolation of hopes, into quietness, and a soul set apart and made peculiar to God." These words are the key to all Coleridge's references to Lamb in all his earlier poems — they are a key to his way of regarding him throughout his life.

Letter I. (p. 1).—Mr May seems to have been a tailor. Robert Lovell was one of the Pantisocrats of 1794. He, Coleridge, and Southey married three sisters, the Misses Fricker—"Milliners of Bath"—as an incidental arrangement towards the carrying out of that social scheme.

The Watchman. — This organ, representing S. T. Coleridge and the future of the world—was planned at the Rummer Tavern in Bristol at the end of 1795. Its history should be read in *Biographia Literaria.* It was preceded by *Conciones ad Populum*, or Addresses to the People (1795), pamphlet harangues containing such titles as this: "The Plot discovered; or, An Address to the People against Ministerial Treason," by Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Letter II. (p. 4).—"Moschus" was Lovell's pseudonym. For James White, see "Essays of Elia" (pp. 225-7), and "Critical Essays" (pp. 179-84), and Notes thereon.

Letter III. (p. 11).—*Joan of Arc* was Southey's Epic, to which, however, Coleridge contributed a few hundred lines of philosophical matter. P. 14, line 4 from foot: "The Monody on H[artley]" is somebody's error—not mine—detected too late. The H is, of course, for Henderson, a friend of Coleridge's friend (and early Mæcenas) Joséph Cottle, by whom the Monody in question was written. An account of him will be found at the end of Cottle's "Reminiscences of Coleridge and Southey." The other Monody, mentioned on p. 16, is

Coleridge's on Chatterton. It ought to be understood that in these letters Lamb is discussing the proof sheets of the second edition of Coleridge's Poems—"To which are added Poems by Charles Lamb and Charles Lloyd"—published in 1797. The protest which follows (p. 19) refers to emendations attempted by the greater Ajax upon C. L's contributions to the volume.

LETTERS IVA. and VI. (pp. 24-33).—"His" at p. 26, line 5, should evidently be "their"; and possibly "Southey" was originally a slip of the pen for "Massinger." *Perry* (p. 29) was editor of the *Morning Chronicle*. The *Allen* mentioned at p. 31 and earlier as going to the bad is apparently the winsome youth described in "Essays of Elia" p. 43. *Madame Mara* (p. 32) was not, of course, named, nor intended, in the "Lines Composed in Concert Room" in which this occurs:

> Not cold, nor stern, my soul! yet I detest
> Those scented Rooms, where, to a gaudy throng,
> Heaves the proud Harlot her distended breast
> In intricacies of laborious song.

Mrs Reynolds was the lady who had taught Lamb his letters, and she was a pensioner of his all the later part of her life.

LETTER VII. (p. 33).—Coleridge's response to this heartrending message cannot be omitted:

[*September* 28, 1796.]

"YOUR letter, my friend, struck me with a mighty horror. It rushed upon me and stupefied my feelings. You bid me write you a religious letter. I am not a man who would attempt to insult the greatness of your anguish by any other consolation. Heaven knows that in the easiest fortunes, there is much dissatisfaction and weariness of spirit; much that calls for the exercise of patience and resignation; but in storms like these, that shake the dwelling and make the heart tremble, there is no middle way between despair and the yielding up of the whole spirit unto the guidance of faith. And surely it is a matter of joy that your faith in

Jesus has been preserved; the Comforter that should relieve you is not far from you. But as you are a Christian, in the name of that Saviour, who was filled with bitterness and made drunken with wormwood, I conjure you to have recourse in frequent prayer to 'his God and your God'; the God of mercies, and father of all comfort. Your poor father is, I hope, almost senseless of the calamity; the unconscious instrument of Divine Providence knows it not, and your mother is in heaven. It is sweet to be roused from a frightful dream by the song of birds, and the gladsome rays of the morning. Ah, how infinitely more sweet to be awakened from the blackness and amazement of a sudden horror by the glories of God manifest and the hallelujahs of angels.

"As to what regards yourself, I approve altogether of your abandoning what you justly call vanities. I look upon you as a man called by sorrow and anguish, and a strange desolation of hopes into quietness, and a soul set apart and made peculiar to God! We cannot arrive at any portion of heavenly bliss without in some measure imitating Christ; and they arrive at the largest inheritance who imitate the most difficult parts of his character, and, bowed down and crushed underfoot, cry in fulness of faith, 'Father, thy will be done.'

"I wish above measure to have you for a little while here; no visitants shall blow on the nakedness of your feelings; you shall be quiet, and your spirit may be healed. I see no possible objection, unless your father's helplessness prevent you, and unless you are necessary to him. If this be not the case, I charge you write me that you will come.

"I charge you, my dearest friend, not to dare to encourage gloom or despair. You are a temporary sharer in human miseries that you may be an eternal partaker of the Divine nature. I charge you, if by any means it is possible, come to me.

I remain your affectionate,

S. T. Coleridge."

Letters IX.-XIII. (pp. 40-49).—Coleridge was at this time intent upon going to live in a cottage at Nether Stowey, near his friend Poole. Of course this, like all migrations,

was to have much effect upon his intellectual life, etc., etc. The receipt of a letter from Poole dissuading him from burying himself, an intellectual missionary, beyond the reach of human intercourse and libraries, fairly tore his being up by the roots, and made him very ill. But I do not know that Coleridge ever (p. 49) "dedicated his poems to Bowles," albeit he avowed Bowles to be "the bard of his idolatry."

LETTERS XIV-XV. (p. 51-55).—Continues the criticism of the proof sheets. The sonnet on Mrs Siddons will be found in vol. v. of this edition. In the next letter he sends the remainder of his own verses—*The Tomb of Douglas* and *To a Young Lady going out to India*—to Coleridge.

LETTER XVI. (p. 55).—The poetical present was evidently a batch of books, one of them being, "Poems on the Death of Priscilla Farmer, by her Grandson, Charles Lloyd," 1796. This book, a handsomely produced tome, contained also Lamb's lines *The Grandame*. Hence the remark (p. 56) about "the odd coincidence of too young men, in one age, carolling their grandmothers." Another of the books would be Cottle's small volume containing his "Monody on Henderson." Dermody's poems were published in 1792

LETTER XX. (p. 68).—Charles Lloyd was a member of a wealthy Quaker family, residing in Birmingham. The number of his brothers and sisters seems to have been anything between twelve and twenty-four, the head of this household (Charles Lloyd, senior) being also head of Lloyd's Bank. The father was in all senses a man of antique strength: of body, and mind and character: and a strong man in grappling with books no less than with business. His children, such of them as we hear of, were of another time and another type. Charles Lloyd the younger was a neurotic young man, in whom lack of humour was the beginning of evil: it may even have induced the epileptic tendency and the melancholy mania which he presently developed. For Robert Lloyd it is difficult to have much respect, though he seems to have

been a nice young man enough. Neither of these was satisfied with the paternal Quakerism; and the dissidence of dissent—dissent from the social and theological fashion of their father—was leading other members of that family in all directions. As to Charles Lloyd, he had early abandoned the office-stool, as a poet needs must, and devoted himself to things which pleased him better: poetry, and metaphysics, for instance—or what he took to be metaphysics. Making the acquaintance of Coleridge in 1796, he received his father's consent to an arrangement by which he should go to reside with S. T. C. and his wife, as a boarder and pupil. The end, in the course of about a year, was disillusionment (as he doubtless called it) and certainly disagreement. When this stage came, he influenced the mind of Lamb against his friend, with consequences that might have been permanent. Lamb had by this time made the acquaintance of the whole family, and was greatly taken with them all at first. It was to him a new great initiation, knowing such a family—he was carried away by the strangeness, the strength, the charm. For Robert Lloyd especially he seems to have conceived a sort of romantic attachment; but he soon felt that Robert Lloyd, and all the younger Lloyds, were making themselves unhappy through sheer easy ignorance of the real troubles of life. There must have been an extensive correspondence to the Lloyds, to Charles Lloyd especially, and to Robert, and perhaps to some others of the family. But it seems all to have been destroyed, except those few letters to Robert, and some which were written to Mr Lloyd at a later date, but which consisted merely of comments upon some exercises in translation which he had submitted to Lamb for criticism.

Letters XXIII.-XXVII. (pp. 81-87).—David Hartley (Coleridge), and the small philosopher, the minute philosopher, are one and the same. He was at this time "my favourite child" to Lamb, as the little Thornton Leigh Hunt (see "Poems") was about twenty years later. He is also frequently referred to under the name of "Pi-Pos," that being the little boy's pronunciation of "Striped Opposum," one of his picture-book acquaintances. The verses

sent on April 15 are *A Vision of Repentance*. This is the "little gentleman" condemned to "ride behind in the basket." Coleridge consigned it to an Appendix of the 1797 book. Mr May (p. 87) is not the tailor, but a friend of Southey's, whom we shall hear of again.

LETTERS XXVIII.-XXXI. (pp. 88-95).—The visit to Stowey had taken place, and Lamb had met not only Coleridge, but Coleridge's friend Poole, and Wordsworth, and his sister Dorothy, to say nothing of the minute philosopher. The true literary monument of the occasion, however, is to be found in Coleridge's poem *This Lime-Tree Bower, my Prison*. "The Patriot" (p. 88) is John Thelwall, long afterwards editor of the *Champion*. The latter part of this holiday was spent with Lloyd (at Burton, near Christchurch), by whom Lamb was brought acquainted with Southey. Hence the allusion on p. 90. *Manchineel*, on p. 91, involves a reference to a poem of Coleridge's in which he had compared a false friend to the treacherous manchineel-tree, "which mixes its own venom with the rain and poisons him who rests beneath its shade." The letter which next follows affords a curious presage to the last of this early Coleridge series. The quarrel with his best friend was not so much a quarrel as an expression of morbidity, due in part to exhaustion and impatience. But mainly, however, it was due to the influence of the Lloyd people—Charles Lloyd, if not already some other members of that pestilential family—who so engaged the sympathies of Lamb, and so talked over all the foibles and all the faults of Coleridge, until they had substituted a half-sinister moral mirage of their own projecting in place of the abounding—and in many little things erring and childish—humanity of a very great man. This was the one moment in Lamb's life in which he was absolutely a fool; for he ought to have comprehended, when all had been said, that one Coleridge was worth a ship-load of Lloyds, to him and to the world. But he had lived a solitary life, was in many things extraordinarily young for his age, and his very virtues, of seriousness and sensibility, were just the things to make him liable to be hypnotised by voices that seemed to speak of wrongs, and that maintained an endless parable about the hatefulness

of insincerity, the sad corruption of intellectual pride. It was a fault, and it was repented in tears; and, as we shall see, it was forgiven as though it had never been. And this is well worth considering, as it marks the great consistency of Coleridge's feeling towards Lamb, which made resentment towards *him* impossible. Shadows came between Coleridge and Wordsworth, and they never quite cleared away again; between Coleridge and Southey there was a period of explicit and diffuse recrimination, and we cannot say that they ever liked or respected each other afterwards; and Southey could not even speak a magnanimous word when his old friend was lying newly dead. But, upon Charles Lamb, at the utter end of days, Coleridge's comment was—upon Charles Lamb and his sister, whom he saw in a retrospect of his life, moving together, parallel with him and never far off, down the spaces of the world through which he had travelled—upon them his comment was: "Dear to my heart yea, as it were my heart."

Letter XXXII. (p. 97).—This is dated October in "Lamb and the Lloyds"; but as the second letter, announcing Mary's recovery, is postmarked August, that cannot well be.

Letters XXXIII.-XLIII. (pp. 98-117).—"The Poetical Calendar," or some such combination, would seem to have been the first title fixed upon for the "Annual Anthology." Priscilla was the sister of Charles and Robert Lloyd, at this time aged 17. *Mystery of God* is the poem afterwards entitled *Living without God in the World.* It appeared in the "Annual Anthology," 1799. *The Dying Lover* is a passage, discarded, from "John Woodvil"

Letters XLIX.-LII. (pp. 128-133).—"Returned from Herts" refers to a visit to Blakesware. "Gebor" is "Gebir"—Landor's poem.

Thomas Manning was a mathematical tutor at Cambridge, and so much of a pundit in other directions that a certain atmosphere of Oriental mystery seems to have hung about him. He was sometimes spoken of by Lamb, and by others, in a way that would seem almost to credit him with thau-

maturgic attributes. He learned Chinese, later, and made a journey to Thibet, which, to be sure, is the very geographical expression of mystery. He was a friend of the Lloyds, and it was while on a visit to Charles Lloyd at Cambridge that Lamb made his acquaintance—in December 1799. He ranks among the select band of very interesting men who have written very uninteresting letters.

Sophia is Sophia Pemberton, whom Charles Lloyd married while still at Cambridge. *The Play* is, of course, "John Woodvil"; and its first title was "Pride's Cure.

LETTERS LIII.-LVI. (pp. 135-138).—The late Mr Dykes Campbell has pointed out that the true date of the first letter must be rather January 23-27. Coleridge had come to London again, and was writing political leaders for the *Morning Post*. *Olivia* was another member of the innumerable Lloyd family, a younger sister (see p. 139) of Charles. Mary Hayes was a literary woman, at once sentimental and "advanced." Writing to Southey on January 25th of this year, Coleridge says: "Miss Hayes I have seen. Charles Lloyd's conduct has been atrocious beyond what you stated. Lamb himself confessed to me that during the time in which he kept up his ranting, sentimental correspondence with Miss Hayes, he frequently read her letters in company, as a subject for *laughter*, and then sate down and answered them quite *à la Rousseau*." The exclamation at p. 139, "Huzza boys! and down with the Atheists!" seems to indicate that Manning had expostulated with Lamb on account of the passage on p. 136, which, rollickingly humorous and impudent as it was meant to be, might have got Manning into difficulties in those days of reaction, repression, and espionage. So this "Huzza!" etc., was intended for the letter-openers.

LETTERS LVII.-LIX. (pp. 139-145).—The first of these explains the kind of troubles which convulsed the Lloyd household. This letter is placed third in the Lloyd series by Mr Lucas, and therefore, inferentially, at the beginning of November 1798. But every word of it presupposes a longer acquaintance than that date would allow for; the reference to the fact of Lamb's parents both being dead brings

us to the early summer of 1799 at least; and the postmark seems to give the year as 1800. The month and the day are legible enough. *Hetty* (p. 141) was the old maidservant of the Lambs. "I send you . . . my Play"—*i.e.* "John Woodvil" in MS. Coleridge was at this time at Grasmere with the Wordsworths. The *Miss Benje* or *Benjay* who is so misnamed on p. 143 was a Miss Benger, author of a Life of Tobin, the dramatist. Of the *Miss Porters*, one was named Jane, and wrote "The Scottish Chiefs," "Thaddeus of Warsaw," and other books that have counted their readers by the million.

Letters LXIII.-LXXII. (pp. 149-170).—Gutch had been a Christ's Hospital boy. Godwin's visit was to Curran, not to Grattan. The imitation of "the Old and Young Courtier" was the *Ballad of Rich and Poor*. The occasion of the spree commemorated on 14th August is not known. As to the alleged affair of the Angel and the Duchess, the allusion is to a certain verse in Coleridge's *Ode to Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire*. The lines entitled *Helen* are by Mary Lamb.

A *Conceit of Diabolical Possession* was finally entitled *Hypochondriacus*. Priscilla was Robert Lloyd's sister, another *revoltée*. She married Bishop Wordsworth, and became the mother and grandmother of bishops. Amos Cottle is even less remembered than his younger brother Joseph, but he was an esteemed author and, still more, an esteemed man in his day. Phillips's Monthly Obituary would be the *Obituary* in the "Monthly Magazine," of which Phillips was the proprietor and, apparently, editor. "Some Greta news." Coleridge was at this time at Greta Hall, where Southey in 1803 took up his abode for life.

Letters LXXV.-LXXXIII. (pp. 174-186).—"The Farmer's Boy" was by Robert Bloomfield, and had a great popularity. The "pleasant hand, one Rickman" arrived, as we shall see, at the very pleasant position of being Clerk to the House of Commons, and he has his share in the Dictionary of National Biography. But he only lives in Lamb's letters. "I have written to Kemble": the play in question was "John Woodvil." "After the heels of *Cooper*":

this was evidently the Godwins' maid. The tickets requested were for "Antonio," first night. P. 81 refers to a revision of the MS. with a view to the publication as a book of what had been damned a few nights before as a play. For the story of this catastrophe, see "Critical Essays."

LETTERS LXXXIV.-XCIV. (pp. 190-208).—The true meaning of the first of these letters is to be found in the words at the end "Thank you for liking my play." Wordsworth did not think such a wonderful deal of the play after all; so Charles Lamb, in no small dudgeon, tells him what *he* thinks of his (Wordsworth's) heaven and earth and sea and sky and rivers and mountains and suns and stars, and such small paraphernalia of the Nature-Poet. There are traces of this mood in the succeeding letter: a constraint in the praise, a certain vicious doggedness in the criticism, and a marked and determined laudation of the work of the *other* Lyrical Balladist! The criticism on Cooke's *Richard the Third* should be compared with the paper on that subject in "Critical Essays." People talk of the finest letter, the noblest letter, etc., that Lamb ever wrote. My own favourite among the whole five hundred is No. XCIII. The *Albion* was edited by John Fenwick, the Ralph Bigod of the essay on the *Two Races of Men*. Of Fenwick, and other more domestic friends of the Lambs about this time, we hear more in Mary Lamb's letters than in her brother's.

LETTERS XCVI.-XCVII. (pp. 211-216) contain criticisms and suggestions for Godwin's tragedy of "Faulkener," for which Lamb wrote a Prologue.

LETTERS XCVIII-CII. (pp. 216-221).—Plumstead was another of the innumerable Lloyds. He seems also to have been the "benevolent, loud-talking, Shakspere-loving Brewer" who is also referred to as "a Lover of Willy"—*sc.* of William Shakespeare—at p. 201. Mr Lucas has been misled by the majuscule, and says he dŏesn't know who Brewer was. The letter to Rickman refers to I know not what. It may conceivably have some connection with the subject of the short note of 16th July 1803, but I hope not.

The next letter was written upon returning from a visit (on which he was accompanied by Mary) to the Coleridges at Keswick. For the impressions thereof, see letter to Manning, which follows. On p. 224 the unseemly array of five ambiguous dots really stands, I take it, for what Lamb on another occasion called *she-dog*. I have in most cases to take the text of Lamb's letters as I find it, or to take it as it is given me, else there would be no such stupidities as the above about this book. "Marshall"—whose name is variously spelt—has been mentioned already and is spoken of in the article on *John Kemble and "Antonio"* in "Critical Essays." For Mrs Godwin, see this vol., p. 238.

Letters CIV-CXII (pp. 225-243).—This Latin letter seems to have been written in answer to a challenge from Coleridge. The Latin style is of the worst, the most school-boyish, but the Latinity—meaning by that merely the grammar—is neither so bad in its original state nor so corrupted by misprints as report would lead folk to believe. Of Coleridge's scheme for getting Lamb to write translations of German poems, he, Coleridge, first supplying him with a prose version, nothing came, that we know of, except the rendering of Thekla's song, to be found in "Poems and Plays." The "Merry natural Captain" (p. 240) was Captain Burney. The lines sent to Manning "On the Death of a young Quaker" are those entitled *Hester* in the "Poems" and in every good English anthology. As to the topics of CXII., Lamb was arranging and seeing about the publication of Coleridge's "Poems," third edition, in which at last the greater Ajax stood alone.

The allusion at the end of No. CX. ("To sit at table—the reverse of fishes in Holland—not as a guest but as a meat") has puzzled Editors and been wrongly explained. The origin of it is a passage in the ludicrous "Character of Holland" to be found among the political poems of Andrew Marvell, where we read that in that debateable patch of pseudo-land stolen from the sea

> "Yet still his claim the injured ocean layed,
> And oft at leap-frog o'er their steeples played . . .
> The fish oft-times the burgher dispossessed
> And sat, not as a meat, but as a guest."

This again may have owed something to a "Description of Holland" by Samuel Butler, describing the Dutch as a folk

> "That feed, like cannibals, on other fishes,
> And serve their cousin-germans up in dishes."

Both of these productions are extensively quoted in an "Indicator" article (Nov. 24, 1819) for which it is possible that Lamb may have supplied the material.

LETTERS CXIII.-CXXIII (pp. 245-57).—Stoddart, who has been mentioned earlier in the letters, was the brother of Mary's friend, Sarah Stoddart, afterwards Mrs Hazlitt. To her was written the postscript which is here numbered CXX., what time she had gone to join her brother at Malta, rather ostensibly in search of a husband. The "letter from the shades" (p. 249) is construed to refer to *An appeal from the Shades*, for which see "Essays and Sketches" (vol. iv. of this edition). I have placed the two letters to Godwin at this point, *faut de mieux*. The first bears no date, and is placed by some editors as late as 1809 or 1812, which is absurd; the second is dated 1806, which *may* be an error. Probably, if I had placed them both earlier still, I should not have been going wrong. They seem at any rate to have some relation to one another, and they have no known relation to anything else. In deciding to place them at the end of 1804 I had not the succeeding letter to Manning in view; but it certainly goes to support the decision.

LETTERS CXXIX.-CXXXV. (pp. 266-274).—*Monkey* is Louisa Martin, the "gamesome ape" of the Poems. For George Dawe, see *Recollections of a late Royal Academician* in "Critical Essays." *Ned Search*: Hazlitt was engaged upon an abridgment of Tucker's "Light of Nature Pursued," which work had been published under the pseudonym of Edward Search. *The New Art of Colouring* was the title of a book, afterwards mentioned, by Tingry. Hazlitt was still, at this time, by profession a painter, and had evidently lent this book to Lamb. *George Burnett* was one of the original Pantisocrats, who were all original. The Spencer (or Spenser) story (p. 273) became a *Reflector* contribution.

Johnson (p. 275 and earlier) was the bookseller (or, in modern terms, publisher) with whom Lamb was negotiating Hazlitt's business, *re* Ned Search, etc.

Letters CXXXVII.-CXLIX. (pp. 276-299).—This Phillips was secretary to the Rt. Hon. Charles Abbott, Speaker of the House of Commons. He and the Burneys were amongst Lamb's more especial "whist-boys," and Lamb afterwards refers to "his few hairs bristling up at the charge of a revoke, which he declares impossible." Mr Tobin (p. 282) was a solicitor, living in Barnard's Inn. His brother did at last get a piece accepted; but along with the news, which almost turned his head, came doctor's orders to be off to the West Indies if he would save his life; and he died on the voyage, the first or second day out. The Tobin of this letter is the one spoken of in "Last Essays of Elia" as "Poor Tobin," for he had lost his sight; but he seems by all accounts to have been an energetic talker. The "young Roscius" of p. 288 was of course young Betty, the boy actor. The (alleged) newspaper account of Hazlitt's suicide, at p. 296, and what follows, are but fragments of an extensive and sustained hoax, for fuller accounts of which I must refer the reader to Mr W. Carew Hazlitt's book "Lamb and Hazlitt." The next letter, to Hazlitt's father, is about more serious business—Hazlitt's courtship of Sarah Stoddart—and is, be it remarked, an outstanding example of Lamb's amazing moral versatility.

Letters CLII.-CLXI. (pp. 306-319).—Lamb had sent in to Godwin the MS. of his "Adventures of Ulysses," and some incidents were found open to objection. *Mrs Clarke* (p. 314) was, or had been, the mistress of the Duke of York, and had been brought into renown by some parliamentary questions and answers—see "Critical Essays," p. 318. The *two volumes of Juvenile Poetry* (p. 315) were "Poetry for Children." Green's *Tu Quoque* is so printed in Talfourd, as if Green were the author and *Tu Quoque* the play, and the error has been perpetuated here by an intermission (alas, too frequent!) of editorial vigilance. But the author of "Green's Tu Quoque, or the City Gallant" was Joseph Cooke. The

rich auditors in Albemarle Street would be the audience of fashionables who attend, or used to attend, lectures at the Royal Institution, where Coleridge (*vide* p. 304) had lately lectured. The *book for children on Titles of Honour* has not been found, but I am inclined to think it may have existed. *Epistemon* (p. 325) is, of course, Mary. Hazlitt, who had more respect for her intelligence than that of any woman he had ever known, probably called her so (Gr. Ἐπιστήμων, the knowing, the wise, or sagacious one).

Letter CLXXV. (p. 336).—The form of address *Dear Resuscitate* has reference to Coleridge's habit of being, or of fancying himself, on the point of death. On another occasion Lamb, in a letter to Gillman, excuses himself for not troubling a dead man (*sc.* Coleridge) about a certain small matter.

Letters CLXXIX.-CXCI. (pp. 348-373).—*Burton* (p. 348) is Burton Junior (*sc.* Charles Lamb), who had evidently sent Wordsworth a copy of the *Champion* containing his *Melancholy of Tailors*—see "Essays and Sketches." Gifford is Christian-named (pp. 350-52) *Baviad* because of his satire, with that title, upon the Della-Cruscan poets, and *Shoemaker* because he had been apprenticed to that calling, which is probably the most intellectual calling in the world, meaning by that, a calling in which there are more men of splendid brain and of a habit of shrewd, independent thinking, than in any other. *Thomas Massa Alsager*, one of the multitude of strong men whom Lamb knew, but to whom no letters of his are extant, was a *Times* journalist, great on finance and greater still on music. Hence "Alsinger." *Capel Lofft*, mentioned later, was a whig lawyer and heterodox publicist. *William Ayrton* (p. 369), who now comes into the correspondence, was a musical critic, impresario, and Musical Director at the King's Theatre, or Italian Opera. *Miss Hutchinson* (p. 370) was Mrs Wordsworth's sister-in-law. "*Louisa, the daughter of Mr Topham*," etc. (p. 372), begins a jumble of true and false, not worth disentangling. But it was true that Mrs Holcroft had become Mrs Kenney. *Fanny* (p. 375) would be her daughter, Fanny Holcroft.

LETTERS CXCIII.-CC. (pp. 376-391).—*Morgan*—elsewhere called for inscrutable reasons Morgan Demigorgon—was a friend, as all his family were hearty friends, of Coleridge. The letter to the Kenneys has hitherto been dated 1826, though that would seem incredible. The inquisitive lady (p. 382) was Mrs Godwin. The reader will not miss the abounding humour of the three dots on the next page, nor suppose they indicate any editorial sin of omission. *Barron Field* (p. 387) had, in the previous year, received a judgeship in New South Wales. *Mr C. Chambers* (p. 389) was the brother of a colleague of Lamb's at the India House, and, it would seem, worthy to be the son of such a gourmet as his father is famed to have been; and, on this account, also deemed worthy by Lamb to be "the only depository of"—an unrevealed secret.

LETTERS CCII.-CCXIII. (pp. 396-413).—There is a similar letter from Wordsworth to Collier, bespeaking his interest for the projected course of lectures. The course was delivered in January following. The date of the letter to Haydon (p. 396) is fixed by Crabb Robinson's memorable description of the supper at which Lamb encountered the Comptroller of Stamps and, in his own exquisite way of putting it, "recoiled from him so strangely." The Messrs Ollier were young men, brothers, and seem to have started as publishers after Lamb's becoming acquainted with them. One of them was a graceful author, but their chief grace is that they not only published the famous "Works" but, according to the traditional account, were the originators and instigators of the decision to collect the scattered Scripta Pre-Eliana. The "Peter Bell" (p. 404), which Lamb had received a week ago, was a sort of advance burlesque of Wordsworth's manner, written by Hood's brother-in-law and collaborator, J. Hamilton Reynolds. Hence it was that Shelley called *his* version "Peter Bell the Third." *Mrs Bruton, the glorious woman* (p. 407), is also glorified in the essay *Mackery End in Hertfordshire*. See "Essays of Elia," vol i. of this edition, p. 148. *Mrs Gold* was the *Miss Burrell* of a few pages back. The letters to Miss Kelly are printed here by the kind permission of Mr John

Hollingshead. For more concerning the topic, the reader is referred to the Preface to "Critical Essays" (vol. iii. of this Edition). Miss Kelly's reply was as follows:—

HENRIETTA STREET, *July 20th* 1819.

AN early and deeply rooted attachment has fixed my heart on one from whom no worldly prospect can well induce me to withdraw it. But while I thus *frankly* and decidedly decline your proposal, believe me, I am not insensible to the high honour which the preference of such a mind as yours confers upon me—let me, however, hope that all thought upon this subject will end with this letter, and that you will henceforth encourage no other sentiment towards me than esteem in my private character and a continuance of that approbation of my humble talents which you have already expressed so much and so often to my advantage and gratification.

Believe me I feel proud to acknowledge myself

Your obliged friend

F. M. KELLY.

To C. LAMB, ESQ.

In Lamb's second letter there is a play upon the word "bones," it having a technical meaning as applied to the bone or ivory tablets belonging to members of the theatre, who could lend them for an evening to pass in a friend.

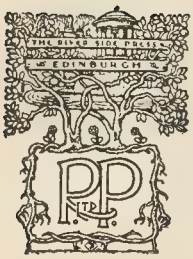
LETTERS CCXV.-CCXVIII. (pp. 415-420).—The disgraceful purpose of the nice letter to Joseph Cottle was to secure a copy of his portrait for an illustrated edition of "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers" which Hunt was then planning to bring out, and which was to contain a portrait gallery of all the damned and spurned ones. Lamb himself, to mention a detail, had been of the number. The *Willy* whose intellectuals are reported upon on pp. 417-420 is, of course, William Wordsworth, junior.

LETTERS CCXIX.-CCXXIII. (pp. 420-421).—Allsop was perhaps the most sincere and reverential admirer among the many admirers whom Lamb's genius, and the charm of his character, drew around him. Himself a man of excep-

tionally serious mind, taking the social condition of mankind much to heart, a reformer, a Radical, almost a revolutionist, he yet found no difficulty in accepting Lamb *in toto*; relishing all his gaiety, allowing for all his irresponsibleness, his affectation of short views and poco-curantism—and has, in fact, written some of the finest things about him. The briefness and datelessness of these letters are due to the fact that Allsop was in business in London, was in the way of seeing the Lambs almost weekly, and that these were but hasty notes, of acknowledgment or invitation, scribbled at the India House and probably given to the office boy to take round to Mr Allsop's.

Letters CCXXIV.-CCXXVI. (pp. 421-423). The lines on Coleridge were in Lloyd's "Desultory Thoughts in London," lately published. The *Manchester Sonnet* was a sonnet on the Manchester Massacre. The *Marine Sonnet* seems to be "Fancy in Nubibus," but why it is said to be "about Brownie" I cannot guess. For Barron Field's *First Fruits of Australian Poetry*, see "Critical Essays." The W. W. whom J. Proctor (p. 423) is invited to meet may either have been Walter Wilson or William Wordsworth. Lamb was in the habit of sharing as widely as possible the great joy he took in a visit from Wordsworth, and would invite as many friends as he could for that night. But I do not find that Wordsworth was still in London in November 1820, though he had been in town for a good many weeks in the late summer.

Letter CCXXVII. (p. 423).—This letter has hitherto been dated vaguely—and probably at random—1824. I have brought it forward here because it has every mark of being the first form—suggestion—nucleus—of the essay on *The Two Races of Men*, which appeared in the "London Magazine" in December 1820.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